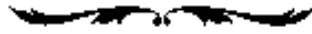


Introduction



On 13th April 1978 during the occasion of Vaisakhi an extraordinary event unfolded in Amritsar. This event was to usher in a new chapter in the Sikh struggle against state oppression, unleashed by the ruling Brahmin-Hindu regime. Bhai Fauja Singh and his twelve companions were key participants in this historic turning point, and their Kurbani or sacrifice forms the focus of this publication.

Though it is twenty-five years since the thirteen Gursikhs courted martyrdom, little is known of their lives, of this crucial historical event and the impact of their Kurbani. This publication offers an insight into the moral and spiritual lives of these contemporary Sikh martyrs, the extraordinary circumstances concerning their martyrdom, as well as the reaction from the Sikh nation and Indian government.

It is often said that the Kurbani of Shaheeds breathes new life into the body and spirit of the Panth. Those that know their history well will recognise this truth. Each day the Ardaas or invocatory prayer recalls and salutes the countless Sikhs who sacrifice their lives for the preservation of the Sikh faith, nation and its distinct identity. This is testament to the power of Kurbani.

The tradition of Shaheedi or martyrdom comes from an inherent love for liberty and justice. It is deeply revered and honoured in Sikhism. During the Panth's turbulent periods of strife and suffering, Shaheedi gave new hope and pride enabling the Sikhs to struggle against all odds. The story of the thirteen Shaheeds is in keeping with this sacred tradition.

Throughout history great souls have risen to guide humanity towards the path of truthful conduct and godliness. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji describes their exalted state:

*He who grieves not in grief,
From avarice, pleasures and fear is free,
And considers gold as dust: Refrain
Who indulges not in slander and flattery,
And is immune to greed, attachment and vanity,
Who in happiness and sorrow is self-poised,
And is indifferent to all praise and blame;
Who discards all hopes and desires,
Who lives detached from the world,
And is not affected by lust or wrath,
In such a one, shines the Light of God.*

Bhai Fauja Singh emanated this spirit. All who knew and met him were witness to his dynamic spiritual transformation after receiving Khande-Di-Pahul. Many observers noted his infectious love for humanity as well as his rigorous spiritual discipline. Others were deeply moved and inspired by his staunch obedience to the Guru's Word, unconquerable faith and battle-readiness.

The 1978 incident is commonly referred to as the 'Amritsar Massacre'. It must not be misunderstood as a tragedy, but rather remembered as a compelling demonstration of spiritual force, moral conviction, dauntless courage and duty in the face of extreme adversity. Bhai Fauja Singh took an uncompromising stand on behalf of the Panth, against the abuse and provocation meted out by the government-sponsored Nirankari sect. The Amritsar Massacre is therefore best described as a heroic battle that awakened the Sikh nation and raised the banner of Panthic solidarity and set the course for political self-determination.

The Shaheeds' Kurbani also marked a new resurgence of the martyrdom tradition. A spirit of renewed national Sikh consciousness and determination emerged from the ashes of the fearless souls. Their Kurbani underscored the great need for the Panth to return to the Guru's teachings.

Their martyrdom had powerful consequences across the Punjab and elsewhere. It injected a resolute determination amongst the Sikh masses to confront India's policy of attrition and discrimination, a determination that stubbornly continues twenty-five years later.

This publication recalls the extraordinary story of the life and martyrdom of Bhai Fauja Singh and his twelve fearless companions. We are pleased to present new information concerning the character of the twelve Shaheeds in this revised second edition.

This present work marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of their Kurbani. We hope this humble effort will give the reader a unique insight into the standards of the Khalsa, as well as contemporary Sikh history. Equally, we hope it will inspire greater confidence within the seekers of Truth, that they may hold steadfast to the sacred Rehit of Guru Gobind Singh Ji and strive in the footsteps of our immortalised heroes.

Akhand Kirtani Jatha (UK)

The Amritsar Massacre

On 13th April 1978, the Akhand Kirtani Jatha gathered together from all over India at Amritsar to hold their yearly Vaisakhi Smagam. Kirtan had started from Amrit Vela and at about ten o'clock an important message was received. The message said that the followers of Nirankari chief Gurbachan Singh were holding a procession in Amritsar and were shouting insulting slogans directed at Guru Granth Sahib Ji and the Sikh religion.

The Sangat knew very well that the Nirankaris had been doing such things for several years. The Nirankaris had even gone so far as to give degrading names to prominent Gursikhs including Mata Tripta, Bhai Gurdas, Bibi Nanaki, Baba Buddha, Bhai Lalo and Bhagat Kabir. They scornfully referred to Guru Granth Sahib Ji as "a bundle of papers", and they called Kar Sewa "Bikar Sewa". The Nirankari leader is on record as saying that Guru Gobind Singh had made only Panj Pyare (Five Beloved) and that he would make 'Sat Sitaare' (seven stars). He had even dared to place his foot upon Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Since 1943 the Nirankaris have annoyed the Sikhs by distorting Gurbani to promote their warped ideals; just as many Sant-led movements do today. However it was during the 1970's that the then Nirankari 'Satguru' Gurbachan 'Singh', went even further. He published articles stating that, Gurdwara Sarovars are pools which serve no purpose and they should be filled-up; Guru Gobind Singh Ji was either fighting battles or hunting and that he knew nothing about meditation; that no sensible person can call the writings in the 'bulky miscellany' (referring to Guru Granth Sahib Ji) a divine revelation.

Bhai Fauja Singh heard the news from the loudspeaker when he was kneading the dough for the langar. He washed his hands and rushed to the congregation. He delivered a short speech, explaining the dire situation and drew a line, asking for those who are willing to accept martyrdom to cross it. Bhai Joginder Singh Talwara asked children and women not to go. However, many Bibian still insisted on going. After performing Ardas, the Gursikhs bowed before Guru Granth Sahib Ji and went off to Ramdas Niwas.

Upon reaching Ramdas Niwas they found that the procession had finished. The Gursikhs then decided that they

should go to the place where the Nirankaris had gathered to hold a peaceful but resolute protest against the blasphemous insults directed at Guru Sahib. It is known that Sikhs of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha and the Bhindra Jatha reached the Reego Bridge near Gobind Gar. Here, the Police stopped them. The Gursikhs remonstrated to the police about the insults being shouted at the gathering. These insults could be heard clearly from where they were standing. They told the police that they wanted to protest against the organisers of the gathering and the hurtful insults. A police officer told the Gursikhs that he would go and stop the Nirankaris and for them to remain there. The police officer went to where the Nirankaris had gathered and the Sikhs waited patiently for thirty minutes for him to return.

On his return there were more policemen accompanying him. D.S.P Joshi told the assembled jatha to go back and that the procession had ended a long time ago. But provoking speeches could still be heard on the loudspeakers. Then about five to six thousand uniformed Nirankaris rushed towards the group of about two to three hundred Gursikhs. Within seconds the massive force of Nirankaris mercilessly attacked them with pistols, rifles, spears, swords, bow and arrows, sticks, stones, acid bottles and home made bombs. The Gursikhs that were hit with bullets fell to the ground and were brutally butchered with swords, spears and axes. As the ground became covered with the bodies of the dead and wounded the police fired tear gas and bullets, but even that was directed towards the jatha, causing further injuries and death. In this way, the Nirankaris received greater assistance and were emboldened.

Bhai Fauja Singh was fired upon by the Superintendent of Police, who emptied the bullets from his pistol into Bhai Fauja Singh's chest. These were not the only bullets he was to receive that day, but he kept on standing, uttering only "Waheguru". Two Sikhs attempted to carry the still breathing and chanting Bhai Fauja Singh to a nearby hospital for emergency treatment, but were quickly arrested by the Police. Bhai Fauja Singh's body was taken by the Police and put into the "dead wagon". Again, another Sikh came upon Bhai Fauja Singh and found him breathing and still uttering "Waheguru". He attempted to help, but half an hour later, when Bibi Amarjit Kaur arrived, Bhai Fauja Singh had attained martyrdom.

D.S.P Joshi was responsible for shooting Bhai Fauja Singh. He did not allow anyone to provide medical attention to Bhai Fauja Singh. Eventually the police took the bodies of the Shaheeds to the morgue. The wounded were taken to hospital.

The astonishing thing is that the gathering of the Nirankaris continued for three-and-a-half hours after this bloody massacre had occurred. It has also become known that the D.C of Gurdaspur, Naranjan Singh I.A.S, and other senior officers were present in the gathering during the massacre. It is clear that the authorities of the Amritsar district allowed the Nirankaris to hold their procession in the Sikhs main city of Amritsar during Vaisakhi. The Police authorities are guilty of colluding with and allowing the Nirankaris complete freedom to kill at will, and not dealing with them properly at the right time.



Followers bowing before Gurbachan who considered himself to be the 'Guru Nanak' of the twentieth century

The Amritsar Massacre

Dalbir Singh produced a telling eyewitness account. Dalbir was a former communist who had devoted himself to trade union activities for more than a decade and is one of many who believe that the Nirankaris had fought the Sikhs with a pre-conceived plan. At the time of the clash he was a correspondent at The Tribune based in Amritsar. His report states:

"It was the afternoon of 13th April 1978. I had returned home from a routine walk around Amritsar. I was taking a nap after lunch when the telephone rang. Someone who refused to identify himself told me that several people had been killed during a shooting incident at the Nirankari convention. I rushed out to the stadium at the railway colony.

There were many dead bodies that were strewn outside the venue of the convention. I didn't yet know what had happened. I wandered around and met Govind Singh, the son-in-law of the Nirankari chief, on the stage. Govind Singh first led me to a tent in which there were many armed persons. After entering it, he suddenly turned around to lead me to another tent in which some Nirankaris were chatting with the Deputy Superintendent of Police.

I approached him and explained that I had seen some armed men who might have been the killers. The officer completely ignored this information. The next day, the police searched the Nirankari centre in Amritsar for the killers and their weapons. They had let the killers scatter, when they could still have been nearby, only to catch scapegoats one day after the actual incident." Dalbir Singh maintains that the local administration had allowed the main culprits to escape.



Bibi Amarjit Kaur stands at the side of her Shaheed husband, Bhai Fauja Singh



The funeral pyre of the thirteen Shaheeds

The government produced a panel of doctors for the post mortem of the dead bodies. It has become known that Mr Janjooha D.C ordered the post mortems to be done only by one doctor and the government orders were not correctly carried out. The D.C was also involved with the Nirankaris.

The press also printed the news details of the incident incorrectly. The Gursikhs of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha and the Bhindra Jatha were called 'fanatics'. Harbhajan Singh Yogi responded stated:

"Today I read the newspaper report in which it was said, 'a body of fanatic Sikhs'. If doing Kirtan and defending the good name of our father Guru Gobind Singh Ji makes us fanatics, then we welcome this allegation. Remember, those who do not defend the honour of their father are never worthy of respect on earth. These martyrs of Amritsar have shown us that we shall live in dignity; if it is not possible, we choose to die with honour."

The killing of the Gursikhs by the Nirankari leader Gurbachan Singh was a heinous crime. We ask from where and from who did the arsenal of weapons come from? By giving the order to kill the leader of the Nirankaris was the main guilty party of the bloody massacre and should have been punished according to the full weight of the law. However, the Indian government administration, its police and judiciary, were exposed as partners to the Nirankaris and guilty of failing to deliver justice.

The Amritsar Massacre set alight the flames of justice in the Panth by the martyrdom of thirteen Gursikhs and seventy wounded. Ten Gursikhs were members of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha and two from the Bhindra Jatha. Many of them left wives and children. The Khalsa Panth will always remember the thirteen Shaheeds, as will their great Kurbani.

The funeral took place on Saturday 15th April 1978 outside Gurdwara Ramsar Sahib, in front of a congregation of about twenty-five to thirty thousand people. The thirteen martyrs were united on a single funeral pyre, to be cremated together.



The funeral procession led by the Panj Pyare and flag bearers progressing through Amritsar



Shaheed Bhai Fauja Singh Ji,
son of Sardar Surain Singh, Amritsar



Shaheed Bhai Avtar Singh Ji,
son of Sardar Bhagwan Singh, Kuda Kurala, Hoshiarpur



Shaheed Bhai Amrik Singh Ji,
son of Sardar Kundan Singh, Khujala, Amritsar



Shaheed Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji,
son of Sardar Jagat Singh, Bhattian, Gurdaspur



Shaheed Bhai Dharambir Singh Ji,
son of Sardar Lal Singh, Ajeet Nagar, Amritsar



Shaheed Bhai Piara Singh Ji,
son of Sardar Kishan Singh, Bhungrani, Hoshiarpur



Shaheed Bhai Kewal Singh Ji,
son of Sardar Amar Singh, Prem Garh, Hoshiarpur



Shaheed Bhai Raghubir Singh Ji,
son of Sardar Nawab Singh, Bhagupur, Amritsar



Shaheed Bhai Hari Singh Ji,
son of Sardar Gurcharan Singh, Kot Ralia Ram, Amritsar



Shaheed Bhai Gurcharan Singh Ji,
son of Sardar Daleep Singh, New Model Town, Ludhiana



Shaheed Bhai Ranbir Singh Fauji,
son of Sardar Kala Singh, Thraaj, Faridkot



Shaheed Bhai Gurdial Singh Ji,
son of Sardar Sohan Singh, Mode, Amritsar

Shaheed Baba Darshan Singh Ji,
son of Sardar Achhar Singh Ji, Mehtha, Amritsar

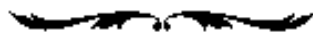


Bhai Jagdev Singh Talwandi, President of the Akali Dal, carrying the ashes of the Shaheeds accompanied by Bibi Harcharan Kaur and Baba Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala

Baba Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala aides Bhai Amolak Singh who was still weak from his wounds sustained during the massacre. Bhai Amolak Singh was also carrying the ashes



The Aftermath



On the morning of 14th April 1978, a day after the massacre, the police force headed by the Senior Superintendent of Police and Deputy Commissioner thoroughly searched the Nirankari Bhavan premises. They carried away an arsenal of firearms and the uniforms worn by the Nirankari murderers.

The Akhand Kirtani Jatha made two clear demands to the authorities. Firstly, they demanded justice according to the law. Secondly, they wanted a firm assurance to prevent anyone showing disrespect towards Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

However, neither of these demands was met. A case was registered against Gurbachan Singh leader of the Nirankaris and sixty-two of his followers. A case was also registered against Naranjan Singh I.A.S. For some unknown reason, the Delhi police authorities did not serve warrants issued by the Sessions Judge. Eventually they were all acquitted. Gurbachan Singh was not deterred by this gruesome episode and continued his showing disrespect towards Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

The Nirankaris were the creation of the 'democratic' Government of India. The sect was created to divide the Sikhs and produce infighting within the Panth. The Indian Express (Chandigarh Edition) featured a report by Sat Pal Baghi in late April 1978. He felt that the Indira Gandhi actively supported the Nirankaris saying:

"The genesis of the real trouble between the Nirankaris and the Akalis goes back to the years when Indira Gandhi headed the Union Government. She wanted to weaken the Shiromani Akali Dal, but found that the Akalis could not be brought to heel. She thought of an elaborate plan to strengthen the Nirankari sect not only in Punjab, but throughout the country and abroad also. Official patronage was extended to the Nirankaris much to the anger of the Akalis who have always considered the Nirankaris as heretics.

In pursuit of this policy to divide and rule, Indira Gandhi personally gave clearance for a diplomatic passport to be issued to the Nirankari Chief, and the Indian High Commissioners and Ambassadors abroad were instructed to show him respect and regard. This was meant to help the sect improve its image and increase its following abroad."

During Indira Gandhi's reign, the Nirankaris received financial assistance from undisclosed Government funds, which were not available for Parliamentary scrutiny. Indira Gandhi ensured that the Congress regime would give official patronage to the Nirankaris. H.S Chhina I.A.S, a staunch Nirankari, was appointed Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government in 1976.

As a result of this official patronage and financial support, the Nirankaris received a considerable political boost within the administrative set-up of the Punjab Government. H.S Chhina appointed Niranjan Singh I.A.S as Deputy Commissioner of Gurdaspur. Niranjan Singh tried his best to widen the field of operation for the Nirankaris.



Nirankari Chief Gurbachan with his patron Indira Gandhi who helped establish the divisory sect to malign the Panth.

The Kanpur Massacre

After the Vaisakhi Massacre of 1978, a peaceful agitation was started against the Nirankaris. Wherever they held their meetings, Gursikhs would go and strongly protest. Thus Gurbachan Singh was unable to address the meetings held at Varanasi, Azamgarh and Allahbad. On 25th September 1978, Gurbachan Singh reached Kanpur at 9.30pm flanked by police officers ordered to provide protection.

The news soon leaked out and Sikhs started a protest march from Gurdwara Gobindpuri Sahib Ji, which is three kilometres away from the Nirankari Bhawan in Kanpur. Women and children were also amongst the protesters. The Nirankari chief had again made full preparations for the Sikhs.

When the Sikh protesters reached the Nirankari Bhawan, the Nirankaris attacked them with brickbats and shotguns. An armed volunteer of the Nirankaris attacked Jathedar Kishan Singh with a spear, piercing his stomach. A fight ensued, and it was then that the police officers started to shoot at the Sikh protesters. As a result, thirteen Sikhs were martyred while a further seventy-four were injured.

This incident further increased Sikh resentment against Nirankaris and the Indian government. On 28th September, the bodies of those killed at Kanpur were carried in huge procession. The day before, the Sikhs of Amritsar, Delhi, Bombay, Lucknow, Kanpur and many other places observed a one-day protest strike.

The names of some of these Shaheeds are: Bibi Darshan Kaur, Bhai Jagjit Singh, Bhai Harcharan Singh, Jathedar Karam Singh, Jathedar Kishan Singh, Baba Kashmira Singh, Bhai Manmohan Singh, Bhai Gurbir Singh, Bhai Balwant Singh and Bhai Gurjit Singh.

As tempers ran high, the Punjab Government decided to ban the Nirankari Chief from entering Punjab for six months. Gurbachan Singh challenged this in the Supreme Court and the ban was lifted.

On the 30th September 1978, the Sikhs of Delhi organised a protest march and presented a memorandum to the Government of India, which demanded that all Nirankari 'Smagams' be banned. On 4th November 1978, the Nirankaris sent out a procession in Delhi to mark their annual conference. The Sikhs retaliated with a counter protest march that ended in bloodshed. The President of the Delhi Akali Dal, Avtar Singh Kohli, was hit on the head by a police-fired tear gas shell and was killed. Aside from him, Bhai Darshan Singh and thirteen-year old Maninder Singh were also Shaheed. Nine other Sikhs received injuries.

During the 5th and 6th November 1978, disturbances broke out in parts of Delhi and a curfew was imposed. Jan Sangh (BJP) workers provided a protection force, enabling the Nirankaris to continue their functions despite disturbances throughout the city. Many Arya Samaj leaders, including Lala Jagat Narain, gave speeches supporting the Nirankaris. This gave a new direction to the anti-Nirankari agitation. The Sikhs now strongly felt that the majority Hindu community in India was in support of the Nirankaris and their activities.

The Sikhs decided to take matters into their own hands following the failure of peaceful means. This time they were to obey Guru Gobind Singh Ji's instruction:

"When all means of redressing a wrong have failed, it is both just and righteous to unsheath the sword".

Bhai Ranjit Singh, a member of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha along with two other Gursikhs assassinated the Nirankari chief at his home on April 24th 1980. Bhai Ranjit Singh had managed to find employment at the Nirankari headquarters in Delhi, posing as a carpenter. Later that evening, he waited with an automatic rifle in a room within their guesthouse. One of the windows gave a clear view of the driveway. At about 11pm, he shot Gurbachan Singh from his position just as he returned home from a public function. Bhai Ranjit Singh managed to escape by jumping down onto a compound wall.

Bhai Sukhdev Singh Babbar, Jathedar of Babbar Khalsa, was a very close friend of Bhai Fauja Singh. He heard the news of Bhai Fauja Singh's martyrdom while his Anand Karaj ceremony was being performed. He left his newly wed wife and rushed directly to Amritsar. He played a major part in eliminating the Nirankaris, including the assassination of the Nirankaris' 'Sat Sitaare'. Later he went underground from where he led the Khalistan movement for fourteen years, before attaining martyrdom on 9th August 1992.

Baba Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala emerged after the Amritsar Massacre as the pivotal figure spearheading the Sikh response to the Indian government of Indira Gandhi. The situation deteriorated as the government continued its policy of undermining the Sikh nation. This included the extensive

murder, rape and humiliation of Sikhs, particularly Sikh youth. Baba Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala educated the Sikh masses about the central government's anti-Sikh policies and discriminations and brought many onto the path of Sikhi through his teachings.

Frustration grew amongst the Sikh masses against the government and the Hindu media barons, such as Lala Jagat Narain, who deliberately and consistently depicted Sikhs as 'terrorists'. Baba Jarnail Singh's popularity became a threat to the government that had by then began to plan Operation Bluestar to bring the Sikh Panth to heel by attacking their temporal and spiritual sovereignty.



The bodies of the Shaheeds awaiting cremation

Hukumnama Against the Nirankaris

On 6th October 1978, a Hukumnama bearing the seal of the Akal Takht was issued calling upon Sikhs all over the world to boycott the Nirankaris. Sikhs were not to allow the sect to flourish within society. A committee comprising of the following notable figures prepared the Hukamnama: Giani Gurdit Singh, Giani Lal Singh, Giani Partap Singh, Giani Sadhu Singh, Sardar Kapur Singh, Sardar Parkash Singh and Sardar Satbir Singh.

Through this Hukamnama, all Sikhs were instructed to stop "roti beti di sanjh", meaning that food and marital relations with the Nirankaris must cease. However, we would like to point out that even today, 20 years later, the Nirankaris are flourishing in England and Canada. Many people we consider to be Sikhs are in fact Nirankaris. They even control some Gurdwaras in Canada and use the Internet to spread their propaganda.

Freedom or Death

The Life and Martyrdom of Shaheed Bhai Fauja Singh Ji



On 17th May 1936 a baby boy was born to a rural family in District Gurdaspur in Punjab. The baby's father Sardar Surain Singh was a middle-class farmer by trade who, after the formation of Pakistan, took his family and all their belongings to Gazneepur, a small village found on the Gurdaspur Dera Baba Nanak road.

From a young age, Fauja Singh was very popular and would lead the local village boys no matter what game they played. Although he was given Amrit whilst studying at school he did not receive the fruits of Naam, so the spiritual hunger within him did not cease, although his mind remained aloof. This spiritual thirst would not go away. In fact, even at this tender age he displayed a detached state of mind, so much so that he vanished for a whole month. He went to seek spiritual guidance from Sants and Sadhus. Naturally, this caused considerable stress to his parents. Eventually, he returned home.

He went on to pass his exams and although he enrolled in the Khalsa College, Amritsar, his mind remained elsewhere. Unconcerned with day-to-day life, he disappeared again and even though his family looked everywhere, and placed advertisements in the local press, they couldn't find their carefree son. Meanwhile, Fauja Singh stayed with various holy people at their Deras and meditated on a Mantar. His family finally found him two years later and after returning home, he returned to college.

Whilst at college, Bhai Fauja Singh mixed with harmful company. This was to tear him away from Sikhi, but Guru Sahib Ji in his mercy quickly put the young Singh back on the right path. In 1964 he received Amrit at a Smagam organised by the Akhand Kirtani Jatha, where the Panj Pyare brought him into the fold of the Khalsa Order. In Vaisakhi 1965 he married Bibi Amarjit Kaur. Bhai Jeevan Singh Ji performed Kirtan at the occasion.

Bhai Fauja Singh increasingly began to apply his body and mind to the study of Gatka and persuaded other young Sikhs to also study and practise it closely. He was acknowledged as the best Gatka practitioner in the area and there was nobody around who could beat him. Professor Gurmukh Singh, who was well acquainted with Bhai Fauja Singh, felt that there was something special about him, which stood out amongst the Sangat:

"I have been in the Jatha for quite a while now and have been lucky enough to meet many highly spiritual Sikhs of the Guru. Bhai Fauja Singh was different; he had Bir Ras and Naam Ras. Bhai Fauja Singh was always ready to fight against falsehood and stand up for the truth. Some highly spiritual Singhs from the Jatha told him to just meditate. They did not

think that in these peaceful times there would be a need for our people to give Shaheedi. The Sikhs gave Shaheedi at the time of the Gurus because the Hindu Rajas, Mughal and Pathan rulers were trying to destroy the Sikh religion. But now the situation was different. Some brothers even joked about his Bir Ras."

After 1970 Bhai Fauja Singh immersed himself in Sewa. His and his wife's wages were spent on serving Gursikhs. Bibi Amarjit Kaur told us that sometimes he used to say; "All the money we spend on ourselves is wasted but the money we spend on doing Sewa for the Gursikhs is not wasted and is saved in our bank". At other times he would say rather ominously; "The tenth Guru formed the Khalsa by shedding his blood. When this plant gets dried-up it needs more blood.

Then the Guru's beloved ones spill their blood to keep the Khalsa flag flying. This cycle repeats itself approximately every fifty years". He would tell his close companions that there was a lot of disrespect emerging, targeted directly at the heart of the Sikh Dharam. He believed future generations would rightfully ask what their forefathers and mothers were like; who accepted everything so quietly and passively.

The spiritual bliss that martyrs get from reading Gurbani verses like: "Purja Purja Kat Marai Kab Hoo Nah Shadai Keth", only they know. It also seems that the words spoken by Shaheeds are special. Bibi Amarjit Kaur says that during his last six months, Bhai Fauja Singh kept saying to her; "Visualise an image of my dead body. Will you be able to bear it? Be strong

and don't despair." Bibi Ji realised that one day her husband was destined to give his life for the Panth.

Like all Chardi-Kalaa Gursikhs, Bhai Fauja Singh possessed the precious gifts of honesty, contentment and divine meditation. He ate what he received happily and was never greedy, constantly seeking to live by the Will of Waheguru. Professor Gurmukh Singh believed that even beyond this, Bhai Fauja Singh was extraordinary for many reasons:

"I first met Bhai Fauja Singh in 1972 at the Darbar Sahib. He did not know me but said his Fateh to me and met me like we had been old friends. He took me to where he was staying and kept me here for two or three days.

During this first meeting he told me something very secretive, which I am now only sharing with the readers after his Shaheedi. He told me that in his previous life he was in Baba Deep Singh's Jatha and became Shaheed at Lohgarh. Now,



Bhai Fauja Singh practising Gatka

again, he has done Shaheedi for the Khalsa Panth in the holy city of Amritsar near Lohgarh. Those that have seen and met Bhai Fauja Singh all agree that he was filled with the spirit of; 'Mohai Murnai Ka Chow Hai'.

Shakespeare says, "What is in a name?" The name Bhai Fauja Singh given to him by his parents, from the Hukamnama of Guru Granth Sahib Ji, was definitely a true picture of him. Bhai Fauja Singh really was a soldier of the Guru's army, not only in this, but also his previous life."

In late 1977 whilst in Gurdaspur Jail, Bhai Fauja Singh wrote a poem under the title of Kurbani. This was probably the only poem written by him because as far as it is known, he was not a poet. It was written about eight months before his Shaheedi and now with hindsight, its underlying theme is worthy of attention. It centres upon the declining state of the Khalsa Panth and the problems facing the Sikh nation. It also serves to relay the emotions of a soul that in its last life shed the mortal frame for the sake of righteousness. How could that soul now have accepted the present day situation, where Guru Sahib Ji was being disrespected openly? This insight goes some way towards explaining why Bhai Fauja Singh who was now forty-two years old found the events taking place in Amritsar absolutely intolerable.

Even before Vaisakhi 1978, Bhai Fauja Singh's personality showed its true colours when in 1972 after the Misri Bajar incident; Guru Granth Sahib Ji was treated with disrespect. Bhai Fauja Singh was disgusted at the police who were too scared to make the arrest of the criminals involved. It was then that he decided to apprehend the miscreants and after catching them, he punished them accordingly. He was deeply saddened by the fact that our 'Panthic leaders' tried to keep the whole incident quiet in case it would lead to some sort of Hindu-Sikh conflict. This political expediency, which sidestepped any notion of love and respect for Guru Sahib Ji, deeply saddened him. He simply could not understand how Sikhs could quietly sit by whilst others insulted and treated Guru Granth Sahib Ji with total disrespect. One question constantly began to etch itself within his mind; 'What has happened to the Khalsa Panth?'

This question arose again on 17th October 1975 when the Sikh Sangat celebrated Sangrand at Gurdwara Bhai Salo Jee. Langar was being served when a gang of thugs came and treated Guru Granth Sahib Ji with disrespect and the assaulted the sewadar and Granthi of the Gurdwara. They

even made plans to burn down the Gurdwara Guru Keh Mehal that night. When Bhai Fauja Singh heard about this incident in the evening he got together some Gursikhs and went there straight away.

First they went to see for themselves the disrespectful treatment of Guru Granth Sahib Ji and the damage done to the Gurdwara building. After seeing this, the Gursikhs



Gursikhs with Baba Deep Singh Ji

started chanting Jaikaras and then stood outside, ready to defend the Guru's House. The thugs soon surrounded them from tall buildings on all four sides, and then started throwing stones, bricks and acid bottles at them. Even though the Gursikh's clothes and bodies were drenched in blood, they managed to protect the Gurdwara from being burnt down. After 1972, this was the second painful event to have taken place at the Sikh headquarters in Amritsar. The Panthic leaders at that time

pretended as if nothing had happened and quite predictably accepted no responsibility.

However, the troublemakers now knew that there were at least a few brave lions amongst the sheep and this was more than enough. After this second incident, Bhai Fauja Singh did not sit quietly at home. In October 1975 Bhai Fauja Singh no longer worked in the office. Referring to the benefits he was receiving, he laughingly said to Professor Gurmukh Singh in 1978 that; "Satguru is having his Sewa done whilst ensuring that I receive my wages from the Punjab Government."

After the 1975 incident Bhai Fauja Singh co-ordinated a new Gursikhi Parchaar programme. He mentions in his poem that; "the light of faith which seems to be dwindling..." He now decided to rectify this. In 1976 a group of Gursikhs started preaching the Guru's message in ten villages within Gurdaspur. Professor Gurmukh Singh was amongst this Jatha.

Bhai Fauja Singh felt that the Sikhs living in cities were not prepared to sacrifice their lives for their Guru; several previous incidents had proved this. So he now turned his attention to the villages so that perhaps the sleeping Panth, which lay dormant within rural life, could be awakened from its slumber.



***Bhai Fauja Singh Ji, always ready to serve
Guru Sahib Ji and Khalsa Panth***



***Shaheed Bhai Fauja Singh Ji
in his 'Shaheedi Roop'***

The programmes covered Sikh history, Gurbani, Kirtan and also included Amrit Sanchaars. This Jatha would also hold amazing Gatka demonstrations. After Kirtan, Bhai Fauja Singh would often talk to the Sangat and this had a truly inspiring effect upon them.

A Smagam was held in March 1977 over fifteen days at Khalsa Farm, during which Bhai Fauja Singh introduced young Sikhs to Gatka and told them about the problems that the Sikh Panth was facing. There they performed Kirtan and meditated and contemplated on ideas and ways to address various problems affecting the Sikh nation.

It was during this period that a Hindu woman was arrested by the Police. During her interrogation, the Police officers raped her. Her husband unable to stop her from being gang-raped went to the magistrates to secure her release; he also filed a formal complaint against the Police. However there was no intervention. By this time point he had become completely exasperated. He then went to various community leaders, including Pundits and Mullahs for help, but none of them wanted to challenge the perpetrators. It was at this point that he decided to approach the Gursikhs.

Various people had told him about one Gursikh called Fauja Singh of Amritsar. Due to his fearless attitude, Bhai Fauja Singh had become quite well known in the region. The aggrieved husband went to see him. Bhai Fauja Singh, along with some Gursikh, went straight to the Police station and upon seeing the pitiable state of the woman, they ensured her immediate release. The guilty police officers were then severely punished. After this incident he was brandished a 'criminal' and sent to prison. His actions were reminiscent of our past history, when Gursikhs went on daring and dangerous missions to liberate women from marauding Afghan armies.

However, it wasn't just invaders and isolated individuals who perpetrated heinous crimes; Bhai Fauja Singh also learnt about those groups who wished to subvert and corrupt the message of our Guru Sahib, which for him was the greatest crime of all. In his poem *Kurbani*, Bhai Fauja Singh warns the Khalsa Panth about the disrespect shown to Guru Granth Sahib taking place everywhere. The insults directed at Guru Sahib Ji by the Nirankaris inflicted deep wounds upon the hearts of Gursikhs.

At the end of his poem, Bhai Fauja Singh states that; "When all else fails, in the hour of need, we will sacrifice our heads at your altar." Bhai Fauja Singh along with twelve other fearless Gursikhs received the opportunity to honour their promise. On 13th April 1978, about one hundred and twenty-five Sikhs went to peacefully protest against the Nirankari procession and Nirankari chief Gurbachan Singh's grievous insults towards Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

We all receive Amrit on the precondition that our head will henceforth belong to Guru Sahib Ji. When the need arises we are expected to lay it down for the sake of righteousness. We hear and read daily in the Ardaas about our forefathers and mothers who gave their lives to protect Dharam and remained committed to the principles of Sikhi until their very last breath. All these events seemed like distant history. Some of us even began to question if such things were possible. The massacre at Amritsar enlivened the memory of those great Shaheeds, and also turned that, which many thought was now myth, into a firm and shocking reality.

KURBANI

Poem of Sacrifice

By
Bhai Fauja Singh Ji

ਤੇਰੀ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ, ਮਨ ਬਚ ਕ੍ਰਮ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਭਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

O True Guru we will serve your everlasting Sikhi with our every word, thought and deed

ਧਨ, ਧਾਮ, ਜਵਾਨੀ, ਜਾਇਦਾਦ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ, ਲੇਖੇ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਲਗਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

We will devote our youth, wealth and all worldly possessions to the cause of the Panth

ਬਾਲ-ਵਿਵਸਥਾ ਤੋਂ ਦੇਹ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਰਖੀ, ਹੁਣ ਤਾਂ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਘੋਲ ਘੁਮਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

My body, preserved since childhood, will be sacrificed now the need has arisen

ਤੇਰੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਰਿਦੇ ਨਿਵਾਸ ਦੇ ਕੇ, ਅਵਗਣ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਗਵਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

By continuously repeating and sincerely following Gurbani we will get rid of all our evil-mindedness

ਜੇ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਹਰ ਰਖੀ, ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨ ਮੇਰੇ, ਬੰਦੋ ਬੰਦ ਭੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਟਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

If you keep your Grace my Graceful Lord, we will sacrifice ourselves limb by limb

ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮ ਨਿਧਾਨੀ, ਸੋਹਣਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਦਸੇ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਸੀਂ ਝੁਲਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

We will endeavour to fly the wonderful flag, which marks the treasure of your Naam, all over the world

ਬੁਝ ਰਹੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋ ਅਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਪਦੀ ਹੈ, ਖੂਨ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਜਗਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

The light of faith that seems to be dwindling will be rekindled with our blood

ਮਨ ਕੀ ਮਤਿ ਨੂੰ ਮੇਟ ਕੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਦਾਤਾ, ਤੇਰੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੋਤਿ ਮਿਲਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

By forsaking our mind's wisdom O Lord, we will blend our soul with yours

ਧੁਰੋਂ ਧੁਰੰਦਰੀ ਅਵਤਰੀ ਰੀਤ ਸੁੰਦਰ, ਰਾਹੁ ਕੇਤੂ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕ ਚਮਕਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

With your divinely ordained faith we will overcome all evil

ਮਿੱਟ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਜੋ ਧਰਮ ਵਾਲੇ, ਲੁਕ ਛੁਪ ਕੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

By sacrificing ourselves we will revive and renovate the fading symbol of our faith

ਮਿਹਰ ਤੇਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਬੋਲਦਾ ਏ, ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਅੰਦਰਲੀ ਬਾਹਰ ਸੁਣਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

The Khalsa speaks with your Grace; our inner-voice will be heard by all

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ-ਰੂਪ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਹੈ ਅਮਰ ਕਰਦੀ, ਕੇਸਾਂ ਸੁਆਸਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਭਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

Sikhi is immortalising nectar and we will serve it with the five Kakkars to our last breath

ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਧਾਨ ਬਣਸੀ, ਸੀਮ ਤੇਰਾ ਹੈ, ਤੈਨੂੰ ਚੜ੍ਹਾ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ।

When all else fails, in the hour of need, we will sacrifice our heads at your altar

The Life and Martyrdom of the Twelve Fearless Ones

The following accounts recall the character and lives of the twelve Shaheeds.

Shaheed Bhai Avtar Singh Ji



Shaheed Bhai Avtar Singh Ji was born in 1912 in the village of Kurala in the district of Hoshiarpur. His mother's name was Dhan Kaur and his father's name was Bhagwan Singh. In his early years he was educated at Moolak Kula primary school. His father was in the army and due to his bravery was awarded land in the village of Mintgomery in Pakistan, and so the whole family moved there. He completed his secondary education there and was married to Bibi Gurbachan Kaur. Bhai Avtar Singh was involved in agricultural work there until Pakistan was formed in 1947. He then returned back to his old village of Kurala and continued farming.

He came to meet Bhai Harnam Singh and Bhai Pritam Singh from Dasuha, and with their Sangat started to read Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh's inspirational books. Upon reading he felt a strong urge to take Amrit and lead a Gursikh way of life, and he also began going to Gurmat Smagams around Talwara and Dasuha with other Gursikhs. He also went to Model Town Ludhiana and met Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh.

Bhai Avtar Singh finally took Amrit with his wife on 13th April 1961, at the Vaisakhi Smagam in Ludhiana. He started wearing the Khalsa uniform (Bana) and also took up the strict Rehat of eating in Sarbloh (iron utensils), which he carried on until the end of his life. Many families were influenced by his high standards of Rehat-Rehni and were inspired to take Amrit.

Bhai Avtar Singh used to visit all the places where the Akhand Kirtani Jatha Smagams were held to enjoy the Kirtan and Naam-Bani. In 1969 the Akhand Kirtani Jatha organised a Yatra to Patna Sahib and Hazoor Sahib by buses and Kirtan was performed at Gurdwaras along the route. Bhai Avtar Singh also took part in that Yatra and also took part in the Sewa of the Panj Pyare in the Smagams.

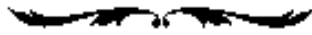
He had such a desire to do Bhagti that he left the accommodation of his village and erected a hut on his farmland far away from his village, where he performed Guru Granth Sahib's Parkash and started living there until his last days. He would get up at 12 o'clock in the night and after having Ishnaan would start doing Naam-Abyass and continue this until daylight.

He started making arrangement to go to the Vaisakhi Smagam being held in Amritsar by the Akhand Kirtani Jatha. He said farewell to his family and told them to always follow a Gursikh way of life and to love one another and that he was not going to return. Bhai Sahib had decided to leave his home and to stay at the Khalsa farm in Gurdaspur and to accompany the Jatha to do Sikhi Parchar in the nearby villages. He arrived at the Vaisakhi Smagam at Amritsar and was the first person to give Shaheedi.

The Gurmukhs who eye-witnessed his Shaheedi say that when a bullet from the Nirankaris stuck him he immediately fell on the floor. But he quickly regained his composure and sat up cross-legged and started doing Nam-Abyass very loudly and then went into a deep meditative state. As he was sitting there, the Nirankaris smashed lathis on his bare head. Bhai Sahib remained sitting there upright and motionless until his last breath.

Shaheed Avtar Singh Ji has five sons and one daughter whose names are: Bhai Kirpal Singh, Bhai Harbaksh Singh, Bhai Iqbal Singh, Bhai Rattan Singh, Bhai Harbhajan Singh and Bibi Surjeet Kaur. A spear and a bullet also injured Bhai Iqbal Singh in one of his legs.

Shaheed Bhai Raghbir Singh Ji



Shaheed Bhai Raghbir Singh Ji was born in the village of Bhagupur in Patti in the district of Amritsar on 10th March 1949 at the house of Sardar Nawab Singh. He was educated in his own village up to the age of fifteen and then joined the army in the Bombay Engineering Group in Kirki, Puna. He stayed on for five years, then resigned from the Army in 1968 and moved to Patiala.

I first met Bhai Raghbir Singh on 14th December 1966 in Kirki, Puna, when I was doing my army service and was being transferred from Sagar (Madh Pradesh) to Training Battalion Number 1, Bombay Engineering Group. I was working as an office clerk and Bhai Sahib was an engine fitter, but being a religious person he was appointed to be Sewadar at the Gurdwara. The weekly Kirtan programmes in Puna were being performed under the control of Professor Beant Singh Ji, and I used to take Bhai Raghbir Singh with me to the Kirtan Smagams. I also kept a tape recorder with me on which I had recorded the Kirtan of Bhai Mohinder Singh Ji, Bhai Joginder Singh Talwara and many other Bibian, which we used to listen to everyday. Other Gursikhs also used to come and Bhai Sahib was greatly influenced by the Bani and Kirtan, so much so that he learnt the Nitnem Banis by memory within a few days and started wearing the Panj Kakkars.

One day he said to me, "I would like to do Darshan of the Gursikhs whose Kirtan you have played to me and would like to have the gift of Amrit Naam from the Panj Pyare". I replied that he should go before the Panj Pyare at the Ludhiana Smagam during Vaisakhi and he will be blessed. He told me that I should also take leave and accompany him. At that time my permanent residence was in Ludhiana.

Bhai Raghbir Singh was having difficulty in obtaining leave but said that he would definitely go to Ludhiana during Vaisakhi. I managed to get two months leave and we both went to Professor Beant Singh as he had good connections with the officers. He phoned Bhai Raghbir Singh's officer to ask if he could have permission for ten days leave. Within an hour his leave was granted and we both left by train on 9th April 1967 and arrived at Ludhiana on 11th April at Amrit Vela.

On the day of Vaisakhi, Bhai Raghbir Singh went before the Panj Pyare and received the gift of Amrit-Naam and became very strict in his Rehat.

Bhai Raghbir Singh did not go to his village but returned to Puna. When I returned after my two months leave he was very pleased to see me. I also felt blessed by Guru Sahib to meet such a beloved of the Guru. Bhai Raghbir Singh never slept after twelve o'clock. He would have his Ishnaan and would then continue doing Naam Simran until sunrise. Within a short period of time he memorized Nitnem, Sukhmani Sahib, Asa Di Vaar, Basant Kee Vaar, Sateh Balwandai Kee Vaar, Shabad Hazari Pathshahi Dasvi, Swaya 'Deenan Ki Prithpal', Chopai 'Pranvo Aad', Akal Ustat, Baramaha Maj and Tukari, Solak Mahalla Nauvi, Gujri Kee Vaar Mahalla Panjma and many other Banis which he used to recite daily. He used to prepare his food with his own hands, but this was not allowed in the army, so he had to stop making his own food. In those days, I used to live with my Singhni and I asked him to eat at our house.

Bhai Gurbachan Singh Ji who lived in Puna arranged an Akhand Path at his home from 23rd December 1967 to 25th December 1967. With Akal Purkh's Grace, Bhai Raghbir Singh listened to the whole Akhand Path cross-legged in one sitting without any food or water. After the Bhog, he also listened to six hours of Kirtan in the same sitting. He did not seem to feel any tiredness. He also used to do Kirtan for many hours by memory and was a very competent Akhand Paathi.

After a little while Bhai Raghbir Singh wanted to leave the military service and his elder brother Captain Pyara Singh managed to discharge him and advised him to take over the farming work in their village because there was nobody else around to do the work. Bhai Raghbir Singh replied that he was not returning to his village because the environment there was not right and by going home he would lose everything. Professor Beant Singh and I decided to send him to the Sura Printing Press in Patiala because a vacancy had arisen for a compositor.

Bhai Raghbir Singh started work at the press at sixty Rupees a month where he always made his own food, and afterwards

Shaheed Jathedar Ranbir Singh Fauji

he moved to work for the Parkash Printing Press. Bhai Raghbir Singh had always been very interested in studying. He would study and do his Nitnem daily and work all day at the press. He found all this difficult, so he left his job and concentrated on his Naam Simran and studies from 1968-1973. At this time Gurmat Parchar was being carried out in the area. Bhai Raghbir Singh and Bhai Fauja Singh would carry out the Sewa of the Panj Pyare during the Amrit Sanchar Smagams.

Bhai Raghbir Singh spent a lot of time with Bhai Manohar Singh Ji of the Red Cross and Bhai Surjeet Singh Ji in Patiala. He also spent some time with me in Ludhiana doing his studies.

Bhai Raghbir Singh always spoke very sweetly and was a very sociable person. At Amrit Vela he would do Naam Abyass for many hours and it would sound as if many Gursikhs were sitting together. Many people were influenced by his Jivan and became Gursikhs. Bhai Raghbir Singh always used to share his earnings with others. After the Bhog of the Paath following his Shaheedi, one Gursikh remembered him by saying that a Gursikh should share one-tenth of his earnings with others, but Bhai Sahib used to live on one-tenth of his earnings and spend the rest on religious causes.

His Anand Karaj took place on 18th October 1975 to Bibi Hardev Kaur, daughter of Captain Sardar Ram Singh (retired), from the village of Batala in Karputhla. This Anand Karaj was also unique in that he himself, his father and four other Gursikhs were present and there were no musicians or any milni. Bibi Ji was also very strict in her Rehat and Bhai Sahib became even more influenced with Bibi Ji's Sangat and started wearing Bana. Bhai Raghbir Singh lived in Sunam for three and quarter years. Due to his efforts, Rainsbhai Kirtans were held there every year.

Bhai Raghbir Singh travelled from Sunam to be present at the Akhand Kirtani Jatha Vaisakhi Smagam. When he heard what the Nirankaris were doing on the birthday of the Khalsa and bearing in mind the Guru's Hukam of 'Gur Ki Ninda Suneh Na Kaan' he went forward barefooted to face the bullets, sticks and swords. He received bullets to his chest, blows to his skull and his bones were broken by lathis, but just like Bhai Avtar Singh Ji, he obtained Shaheedi in Chardi-Kala.

***Jio Jal Meh Aey Katana
Thi Jothi Sang Jot Smana***

(Sukhmani Sahib, Mahalla 5, Panna 278)

He left behind his wife and two children, one whose age were one and half years and the other only five months at the time of his Shaheedi. Both are now married to young Gursikhs in UK. Bibi Hardev Kaur Ji is employed by Punjab and Sind Bank.

**By Bhai Kirpal Singh Ji
(Shapur, Amballa)**



Shaheed Ranbir Singh Ji was born on 17th December 1935 at the house of Sardar Kala Singh in the village of Thraj in the district of Faridkot. Sardar Kala Singh was a farmer. During the Jaito Morcha he was sentenced to fourteen years in jail, of which he served five. He was also a member of Sardar Bhagat Singh's Naujwaan Sabha.

Bhai Ranbir Singh's wife, Sardari Rajwant Kaur, looks after and educates their two children (Daljeet Singh aged thirteen and Parmjeet Kaur aged eleven). He has one sister and three brothers who are employed in the army or work in agriculture.

Bhai Ranbir Singh became an Amritdhari from the age of six. After completing his basic education he joined the army. He knew the Panj Banis and Sukhmani Sahib by heart and was a Nitnemi of the Panj Granthi and also in charge of religious duties in the army. He received a pension after serving twenty years in the army and came to stay with Sant Kartar Singh Ji Khalsa, Jatha Bhindra Mehta. Sant Ji made him the Jathedar of the Mehta Gurdwara. He would give his monthly pension and sold his tractor trolley for Sewa.

Bhai Ranbir Singh was the Jathedar in charge of conducting protests against false gurus in Komen, Mehta, Kadia and Amritsar. On the 13th April he also obtained Shaheedi like his other brothers while protesting in a peaceful manner. Two days before this incident, on the 11th April, Bhai Ranbir Singh went to Goindwal Sahib and did eighty-four Paaths on the steps of the Boali Sahib and did Ardas to Guru Sahib Ji that may his body be used for the service of the Guru. According to Guru's Will his Ardas was answered.

By Bhai Amrik Singh (Mehta)

Shaheed Bhai Kewal Singh Ji



Shaheed Bhai Kewal Singh Ji was born on 9th March 1953, in the area of Premgarh in Hoshiarpur. His father's name was Sardar Amar Singh and his mother's name was Satia Kaur. He spent the first five to seven years of his childhood in Hoshiarpur and in 1960 moved to Calcutta with his father. His father ran a transport company in Calcutta, which was doing quite well. Here, he was put into school but he only passed four classes. His family tried to persuade him to continue studying but he was more interested in working. So in 1966 he went to Kishan Ganj (Bihar) to train in motor electrics, where he trained for a year and then returned to Calcutta.

As well as working he also became interested in reading Gurbani and in 1971-72 he received Amrit at an Akhand Kirtani Jatha Smagam. After completing his training he did not find a job but just did domestic work. One day he became seriously ill, he was vomiting blood and remained unconscious for three days. He was administered eighteen bottles of blood and seven bottles of glucose and the doctors said there was little hope for him. But Waheguru has some other Sewa in store for him and protected him with his own hand. Bhai Sahib Jeevan Singh Ji Ragi from Ludhiana performed Ardas for him and he became well again. He then moved from Calcutta to Hoshiarpur and here he met Gursikh Sangat.

We both decided to learn Shashtar-Vidya (science of weapons) and we used to travel seven miles everyday to get training. With Satguru's grace we both acquired this skill. He knew the five Nitnem Banis by memory and also did Asa Di Vaar and Sukhmani Sahib daily as well as some other Banis.

One day, he became ill again at his home in Hoshiarpur and he started getting bad pains in his stomach. His mother said that she would call a doctor but he told his younger sister to start reading Sukhmani Sahib instead. He listened to the Gurbani for two or three hours and then fell asleep, and in the morning he awoke feeling completely well again. This is an example of his love and faith in Gurbani.

At his father's request, he went to Calcutta again to do some domestic work. He also spent a lot of his time reading Gurbani

and living amongst other Gursikhs. According to God's Will, he again became very ill and started vomiting blood. His body became very weak and there was not much chance of him surviving. Bhai Kewal told me later, that when he was in this state he saw death standing in front of him and he prayed to Guru Sahib, "Sache Patshah Jee, I know I am going to die one day, but do not give me this kind of death. This is the death of cats and dogs. Let me become a Shaheed in the battlefield so that I may get Mukhti from life and death. May my body be used for doing Sewa for you." He did this Ardas for a long time and Satguru Ji heard his Ardas and he then became well again.

He was very interested in Shastar-Vidya and Shastars. For example if he came across any Shastar he liked he would buy it no matter what the price and would read the following Dohira.

***As kirpan khando karg, tupak tabar ar theer,
Saif sarohi sethi yehe hamarai peer
Theer tuhi sethi tuhi, tuhi tabar tarwar
Naam thuharo jo japai, pheo sind pav paar
Kaal tuhi kaali tuhi, tuhi teg ur teer,
Tuhi nishani jeet ki, aaj tuhi jag beer***

(Shastar Mala, Pathshahi 10)

He not only learned Gathka, but also learned how to make his own Shastars. He would spend hours making them and would take them to Smagams and present them to Gursikhs as gifts. He also would teach Gursikhs how to look after Shastars properly, to ensure the Khalsa is always battle-ready.

Just as he was interested in Shastars, he also had a great love for Naam-Bani. If he did make any remarks to somebody in anger, then he would immediately beg forgiveness with folded hands. He very much loved his fellow Gursikhs. Sometimes his family members would ask him why he spends all his time with the Gursikhs and does no other work. His family owned a large amount of property, but he still lived a very carefree life and was not at all interested in money. Once I said to him that you don't do any work, nor do you listen to any of your family,

Shaheed Bhai Gurdial Singh Ji

so they will not give any of their property to you. He replied that he did not need any property - what use would it be to him. He said he wanted to spend all his time with Gursikhs.

In November 1977 he again returned to Hoshiarpur. The Gursikhs would ask him to do some work so about two months prior to his Shaheedi, he started working. He promised that he would serve langar to the Singhs out of his first wages, but he was never able to carry out this Sewa. Afterwards his family carried out his wish and served Langar to Gursikhs.

Bhai Kewal Singh also enjoyed playing the tabla and performing Kirtan. Ten minutes before his Shaheedi, I saw him in Chardi-Kala. Bhai Fauja Singh and Bhai Kewal Singh were together during the peaceful protest. First Bhai Fauja Singh was shot and fell and then Bhai Kewal Singh lied on top of him so that the Nirankaris could not injure him further. But the Nirankaris then killed Bhai Kewal Singh.

Bhai Kewal Singh has one elder brother Bhai Jagjeet Singh who is a devoted Gursikh and Nitnemi and three sisters who are married. Even though his loss for the family is great, his Kurbani is a great example for future generations.

By Bhai Amrik Singh (Mehta)



Bhai Kewal Singh Ji (right) with Bhai Amolak Singh (left) and Bhai Swami Singh (centre) from the United States.



Shaheed Bhai Gurdial Singh Ji was born in 1946 in village Modai in District Amritsar. His father's name was Bhai Sohan Singh Ji and his mother's name was Gulab Kaur Ji. He was married to Bibi Jagir Kaur and had four children named: Kanverjeet Kaur, Charanjeet Singh, Sukhraj Kaur and Karamjeet Singh, and were aged seven, five-and-half, three and one-and-half respectively at the time of his Shaheedi.

From a tender age Bhai Gurdial Singh was an amazing soul. In his youth he went on to pass his tenth class in the government school in Attari and then started helping at home with the farming work.

Bhai Gurdial Singh started doing Sehaj Paath Abyass of Guru Granth Sahib. From the beginning, he did Paath from Laridaar Saroop (Guru Granth Sahib composed of words linked together) and slowly he learnt to do Akhand Paath. He then started doing Sewa of Paath near and far from his village and never took any money in return. He then started going to Mehta and other places for Satsang. He took Amrit from Bhindrawale Jatha in 1976. At that time his wife was not ready to take Amrit but later on she also agreed. He would rise daily at Amrit Vela, do his Nitnem and recited Sukhmani Sahib as well. He also studied religious books and used to acquire these from his close friends. At the time of his Shaheedi he was reading 'Gurmat Nirnai Bhandar'.

With his loving persuasion many other Sikhs in his village also took Amrit. He was always the main organiser for arranging programs at the Gurdwara and at other religious events. Everybody used to take advice from him before going ahead with any event.

Bhai Gurdial Singh went to Amritsar the day before the massacre. He wanted to do Darshan of the Guru's Darbar, to bathe in the Amrit Sarowar and had a desire to meet Baba Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala. On the day of Vaisakhi, after doing Ishnaan and Nitnem, he went to the Divaan at Manji Sahib. He was listening to the Kirtan, when he decided to leave with the Gursikhs who went to protest and courted martyrdom.

Shaheed Bhai Pyara Singh Ji



Shaheed Bhai Pyara Singh Ji was born on 2nd February 1954 to Mata Bhago and Sardar Kishan Singh in the village of Bhungruni in Hoshiarpur. He had two sisters and two brothers, one sister is married and the other trained to be a nurse in Africa, and one brother joined the army a month before Bhai Pyara Singh's Shaheedi.

After passing the 11th class, he joined the airforce on 10th July 1971, passing the course with a lot of hard work and motivation. He was a very sociable and sweet talking person, and so was very much liked by his officers.

Bhai Pyara Singh was transferred to Shabooa in Assam and here he met a Gurmukh, Prithipal Singh Ji, which changed his life. He learnt about Gurmat and started to read Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh's books on Gurmat. He then took Amrit from the Panj Pyare at an Akhand Kirtani Jatha Smagam. He would wake up at two am at Amrit Vela, have his Ishnaan and then do two hours of continuous Nam-Abyass. Then he would do Nitnem and visit the Gurdwara Sahib.

In Shabooa, he was given the Sewa of looking after Gurdwara Sahib by the unit and here he used to recite Sukhmani Sahib and Asa Di Vaar. In a short period of time he memorised a lot of Gurbani and could always be found reciting Naam-Bani. He would tell others not to talk too much and instead recite Naam-Bani. He also enjoyed doing Kirtan and he memorised so much Bani that he would do Kirtan all night by memory without becoming tired.

Bhai Pyara Singh was then transferred from Shabooa to Hyderabad and went from there to Madras for training. A colleague of his at the Hyderabad unit wrote the following about him: "I met him for the first time when he came from training in Madras. In my fifteen to sixteen years in the airforce this is the first person I have seen here wearing a Kurtha Pjama and a Kirpan on top. On the 14th April, we read in the papers that there had been a massacre in Amritsar on Vaisakhi, and we were wondering if Bhai Pyara Singh Ji was amongst the killed or injured because he used to often go to these Smagams. This turned out to be true. On the 18th April, we received a

telegram from his father informing us that Pyara Singh had passed away on the 13th April. There was nothing else in the telegram. We understood this to mean that he had become Shaheed at Amritsar and an Akhand Path was started for him. At the Bhog, Sangat from far away came. He was a Gursikh possessing many qualities and shared these with others. He encouraged many people to read Gurbani and taught Kirtan.

He had a very gentle manner and would very humbly refer to elders and Bibian as Bhen Ji, Baba Ji or Bhai Sahib and would also refer to young children as Bhen Ji or Bhai Sahib. He also taught many children Punjabi, and all the children are asking 'when will our Pyara uncle be coming back'. They would call him Pyara Uncle Singh instead of uncle Pyara Singh. With the efforts of Bhai Pyara Singh many Rainsbhai Kirtans took place in Hyderabad. Bhai Pyara Singh would go to units twenty-five to thirty miles away to listen to Kirtan Rainsbhais and would sit cross-legged for the whole night without getting up.

He was also an accomplished Kirtani but he enjoyed listening to Kirtan more than performing it himself. He had a very loud and sweet voice and would always do Kirtan with his eyes closed in a very emotional manner. When going to or returning from the Gurdwara he would never allow anyone to speak a word. He would either recite a Shabad or read some Bani and would advise his fellow Gursikhs to do the same.

If there were an Akhand Paath starting anywhere he would go there and continuously listen to and read the Bani for three days. In his unit he got everybody to start reading Gurbani and would do lectures on the sin of meat and alcohol, which resulted in many people stopping both."

About his Bebek Rehat, his colleague from the Hyderabad unit writes, "at first he used to eat or drink from other Sikh's houses. Then he became stricter in his Rehat and would only eat from food made by Amritdharis, and later he became a Sarblohi (eating food in iron utensils). In the Army mess we were able to get free food, but he would spend his own money to buy food and make his own. Because his Bebek Rehat was very difficult, he was happy to get married. Whenever his mother and father

Shaheed Baba Darshan Singh Ji

would find a suitable match for him he would not be happy with their choice. He would reply that the girl should be Chardi-Kala, who could follow the same path as him. His family members were putting quite a bit of pressure on him. One day, he did Ardas and put two pieces of paper in front of Guru Sahib Ji for him to get married or to stay single. Guru Ji's Hukam was 'no'. He was a bit sad, but he agreed with the Hukam and told his parents in writing that he would remain unmarried for the rest of his life and would do Sewa of the Panth."

Later one or two Gursikhs tried to persuade him that he should lead a married life and that this was the Sikh way of life. He agreed to do as they told him but reminded them that Guru Ji's Hukam was 'no'. Whenever he did Ardas he would always ask for his life to serve the purpose he was sent here for. He wanted Shaheedi from his heart.

Colleagues from Bhai Pyara Singh's unit tell us that he would never tell anybody about his inner mystical experiences. During his holidays, he would not go to meet his mother and father but to the Akhand Kirtani Jatha's Smagams. He would never let anybody know about contributions he made from his Daswand or if he bought any goods for the Gurdwara Sahib. He was always happy doing Sewa of others and because of Naam he was always filled with humbleness. We felt honoured that we were able to do his Darshan, to hear him read Bani and to listen to his Kirtan and gained many qualities from him.

Editor's note: Sura Family

Bhai Pyara Singh was a very dear Gursikh of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha who used to stay hidden in the Sangat. He used to come to the Jatha Smagams with great enthusiasm and remain engrossed in Naam Simran. Nobody who saw him for the first time could say that this beloved of the Guru had so many hidden qualities. He spoke very little at the Kirtan Smagams.

Bhai Pyara Singh had taken two months leave before the Vaisakhi Smagam, but did not go to his village and instead spent a month travelling around various villages with the Kirtani Jatha and from there went to the Vaisakhi Smagam in Amritsar.

He used his Daswand for Gurmat Parchar by subscribing many Gursikhs in his Hyderabad unit and in his village Bhungruni to the monthly religious 'Sura' magazine and sent Gurmat books written by Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh to many Sikhs. Only a few people knew that he was an accomplished Kirtani, he remained hidden in the Kirtan Smagams.

The loss of this loved one had such an effect on his parents that they promised to take Amrit like their son during a Panthic gathering in memory of the Shaheeds at the Akal Takht on 23rd April 1978. The Sangat from the village of Bhungruni and the nearby villages also held a large Shaheedi Smagam in memory of the Shaheedi of Bhai Pyara Singh Ji. The historical Gurdwara of Guru Har Rai is built in this area where the Sangat get together. The Shaheedi of Bhai Pyara Singh has brought a new awakening for Gursikhi in the area and filled people with fighting spirit.



Shaheed Baba Darshan Singh Ji was born in the village of Nawan Vaironangal in the Tehsil of Batala at the house of Sardar Achher Singh. At the time of Shaheedi his age was between sixty-five to seventy years old and he was religious minded from childhood. His mother and father were Amritdhari and he took Amrit at the age of ten. Even though he did not get much school education, he was very good at Gurmat education. He was a Nitnemi and an accomplished Akhand Paathi.

Apart from the Panj Banis, his Nitnem also included Asa Di Vaar and Sukhmani Sahib. He remained single for the whole of his life. He stayed at Cheleana Sahib for twenty years and was present at the Shaheedi massacre there. Here he took part in the one hundred and one Akhand Paaths done for the Shaheed Singhs. Afterwards, two hundred and two Akhand Paaths were done for the Shaheed Singhs at the village of Kaleh, and Bhai Darshan Singh stayed there for one and half years doing Sewa of the Akhand Paaths.

Afterwards he stayed at the Gurdwara Guriana Sahib, the historical Gurdwara of the sixth Guru in Vaironangal. There he stayed as a Granthi and did a lot of Sewa teaching many people Paath from the Guru Granth Sahib and made them into Akhand Paathis. He would only eat Bebek food prepared by his own hands and always kept a Sarbloh (iron) Simrana in his hands.

After doing Sewa at Guriana Sahib for about nine or ten years he moved to Dera Mehta. Here, Sant Kartar Singh Ji Khalsa appointed him Jathedar of the land of the Dera. He carried out this Sewa until the end. He also used to give his pension to the Dera.

Shaheed Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji



Shaheed Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji was born on 17th April 1947 in the village of Bhattian in Gurdaspur. His father Sardar Jagat Singh was a Gursikh since 1923-24 to the present. Whenever I speak to him about Harbhajan Singh's Shaheedi, he has an immediate shine in his eyes and tells me in a very cool and calm manner that his son has managed to achieve so much in his thirty-one years and has managed to get much further than us. He says with great humbleness that he is very proud that his son has given Shaheedi to protect the honour of the Khalsa Panth and against the disrespect shown to Guru Sahib.

Bhai Harbhajan Singh's mother is also an Amritdhari Bibi. On her son's Shaheedi she thanked Akal Purkh, as Guru Sahib's Hukam is:

***Jis kee basat this agay rakeh
Prabh ki agay maneh matheh***

She did not shed one tear and even tried to stop anybody else who was crying. His mother, Harbans Kaur has a very gentle personality and never even speaks loudly to anyone at home. Most of what Harbhajan Singh achieved was due to his Gurmukh mother and father.

Shaheed Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji leaves behind his wife Joginder Kaur Ji who wears a Keski and three children, Baljinder Singh, Kulwant Kaur and Balkar Singh. His wife is living in Chardi Kala according to God's Will. Bhai Harbhajan Singh has three brothers: Sardar Niranjn Singh who is a teacher in a government school, Sardar Gurmeet Singh who is with the BSF and Sardar Hardev Singh who is a farmer. He also has two sisters who are married. He was the only one who was Amritdhari out of his brothers and sisters.

Bhai Harbhajan Singh studied up to the tenth class in the government school of Kahnuwaan. After this he began studying for some time in college, but then enrolled to do a course in Agriculture at Ludhiana University. After completing the course he started working as an Inspector in Gobindpur block. About three years ago he took Amrit with all his family at the Akhand Kirtani Jatha Smagam at Batala on Guru Nanak Ji's

Gurpurb. He used to enjoy wearing fashionable clothes. A little while after taking Amrit he started wearing the Khalsa Bana with Damala and blue Chola. He had a glowing face, a special shine in his eyes and was always in Chardi Kala.

Bhai Harbhajan Singh had the courage to always speak the truth to somebody's face and would never agree to anything that wasn't based on Gurmat. From the day he took Amrit he was a complete Bebeki, so much so that he only drank milk milked by the hands of an Amritdhari. He was admitted to hospital for a period of time, but he would not allow the doctors to touch his hair and left his fate in the hands of Akal Purakh. Guru Sahib healed him and made him well again quickly.

He would get up at Amrit Vela to do Naam Abyass according to Guru Sahib's Hukam. After Naam-Abyass he would recite the Banis of Japji, Jaap, Swaya, Chopai and Anand Sahib. Whenever he had more time he would also recite Asa Di Vaar, Sukhmani Sahib, Shabad Hazarai Pathshahi Dasvi and Shabad Hazarai Patshahi Panjmi. After Nitnem he would do Darshan of Guru Sahib and only then would he have something to eat.

He very much enjoyed performing and listening to Kirtan. He would sit the whole night, singing with the Kirtanis and doing Naam-Abyass. He would never sing a Shabad without first learning it by memory. Whenever he met another Gursikh, it would always be with great humbleness. He would go so far as to hold the other Gursikhs hand and start kissing it. He would always embrace Gursikhs and do Naam-Abyass with them and it would seem that they had not seen each other for ages. Whenever he met me, it was always in a very loving manner. Bhai Harbhajan Singh was also very close to Bhai Gurdial Singh Ladupur Ji, Bhai Joginder Singh Ji Nenokhot, Bhai Bakshish Singh Ji and Bhai Sarbjeet Singh Ji Udonangal. Once he met Bhai Sarbjeet Singh who had his beard tied up at the time. Bhai Harbhajan Singh told him it was not becoming for a Gursikh to tie up his beard. Bhai Sarbjeet Singh immediately opened his beard and never tied it up again. This is an example of how other Singhs respected him.

Bhai Harbhajan Singh had great respect for Master Niranjn Singh Ji from Gurdaspur and greatly enjoyed his Kirtan.

Whenever he met Master Darshan Singh Ji Basrawa he would run to touch his feet and would never stop no matter how much Master Darshan Singh Ji tried. He had so much love for his fellow Gursikhs. Bhai Harbhajan Singh Ji gave so much to

the Guru-Panth in his young age. According to the Guru's Hukkam, 'Thun Munn Sabh Sonp Gur Ko Hukam Munia Payai', he gave everything to his Guru.

Shaheed Giani Hari Singh Ji



Shaheed Giani Hari Singh Ji was born in the village of Jandawale, Tehsil Kharian, in Gujrat on 17th June 1923, the day on which Kaar Sewa of the Amritsar Sarowar started. His mother's name was Mata Bhag Kaur and his father's name was Giani Gurcharan Singh who ran his own business in Amritsar. His secondary education was in Guru Ramdas Khalsa High School in Amritsar and he took Amrit at the young age of eleven.

His father, Giani Gurcharan Singh was a very devoted Gursikh and would travel around with Baba Prem Singh Marabewale to do Parchar of Gurbani and took part in the Sewa of the five during Amrit Sinchar. Bhai Hari Singh learnt to read Gurbani from his father during childhood. Apart from his Nitnem he would daily recite Sukhmani Sahib and Shabads from the tenth Guru's Bani that he had memorised. He would always recite God's Name, even while working.

His father took part in the Guru Keh Baag and Punjabi Suba Morchas and spent two and a half years in Borstal jail. After seeing his father doing this Kurbani for Panthic causes he also served seven months before being released during the 1955 and 1960 Punjabi Suba Morchas. He always told his family members to work honestly and accumulate the true of wealth of Naam and was a highly spiritual Naam-Abyassi Gursikh. He faced many difficulties in his life, but never wavered from his faith in Sikhi. Whenever he heard news about any Kirtan Smagam he would always try to go there. He was very sweet-talking and never had anything bad to say about anyone and respected elders and youngsters alike. He was always happy to

do the Darshan of Gursikhs and to do their Sewa.

Bhai Hari Singh went to listen to Kirtan at the Akhand Kirtani Jatha's yearly Vaisakhi Smagam on Vaisakhi 13th April 1978 in Ajit Naggar, Amritsar. Here, news was received about the Nirankaris shouting slogans against the Guru Granth Sahib Ji and the Gursikhs decided to launch a peaceful protest.

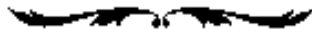
They all started walking towards the Nirankari gathering including Bhai Hari Singh and his young son Bhai Nonihal Singh. When the Gursikhs were about three hundred yards from the gathering the police stopped them. Soon afterwards, the Nirankaris, who were armed with swords, axes, guns and spears, attacked them. Bhai Hari Singh was Shaheed and his son was badly injured.

Shaheed Bhai Hari Singh Ji's funeral took place on the 15th April 1978 along with the other twelve Shaheeds according to the Gurmaryada on the ground in front of Ramsar Sahib. He was the eldest of his brothers and leaves behind his wife, three sons and one daughter.

During a Panthic gathering at Sri Akal Takht Sahib on 23rd April 1978, Shaheed Bhai Hari Singh Ji's wife was honoured by the Akal Takht and gave the message to the Panth: "My husband has given his life for Guru Ji and my three sons are also ready to give their lives whenever the Panth needs them."

By Bhai Baldev Singh Ji

Shaheed Bhai Gurcharan Singh Ji



Shaheed Bhai Gurcharan Singh Ji was born at the house of Bhai Daleep Singh Ji, an agricultural inspector and Narain Kaur on 10th October 1946 in Rurka Korad in Jullunder. Bhai Daleep Singh was transferred to Ludhiana when Gurcharan Singh was about three years old, and the whole family took Amrit at Narangwal. Bhai Gurcharan Singh's father, Bhai Daleep Singh was one of the close associates of Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh Ji.

Bhai Gurcharan Singh's primary education was in Gidarwaha, Tehsil Mukhtsar and he studied up to the ninth class at Nathana in Batinda. He passed his tenth class in his village Nangal, Tehsil Moga at Guru Nanak High School and then left studying to do farming. In 1965 he was admitted into the Agricultural University and after passing his exams he was employed in Malowal (Ferozpur) in 1967 and in a block in Ferozpur in 1968. Then he started doing government service and was sent to Hargobindpur in Gurdaspur. In 1972 he left this and in 1973 was again employed by the Punjab Agricultural University.

The young Gursikh enjoyed doing Langar Sewa of the Sangat during Smagams and would never get tired of doing Sewa day and night. From a young age he enjoyed going to the Sangat to listen to Kirtan and would always sit right in front of the Kirtani Gursikhs. He would go around the houses to call youngsters who were interested in listening to Kirtan and would sit them on the front and rear of his bicycle and take them to join the Sangat.

With Guru Ji's Grace he learnt the Nitnem of the Panj Banis by memory in his seventh class, and when he went to the village of Nangal in Faridkhot he would do the Sewa of reading Sukhmani Sahib at the Gurdwara Sahib at Amrit Vela. Bhai Gurcharan Singh never had any bad feelings for anyone and if some person did not speak to him due to some differences then he would personally go around to their house and humbly talk to them.

Once when he was about five or six years old the whole family went to Narangwal to meet Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir

Singh. Everybody lovingly embraced Bhai Sahib and Bhai Sahib picked up all the children. When his turn came he embraced Bhai Sahib in such a way that he would not let go of him and they did Naam Simran together for a long time.

He would help the needy without any hesitation and used to take responsibility of Sewa of sending food to patients in hospital in the morning and evening. He would do this Sewa twice a day, go to work and would go to study in evening classes and also found time to come and join the Sangat. He had a very close and loving relationship with Bhai Fauja Singh Ji and was greatly influenced by his fearless attitude.

He gave more importance to meeting and doing Darshan of Gursikhs than even to his most important duties. On 15th April 1978 he was to attend the first exam for his degree, but he thought it more important to go to join the Sangat at the Akhand Kirtani Smagam for Vaisakhi in Amritsar on 12th April where his father, Daleep Singh was also present. To Bhai Gurcharan Singh the best revision and preparation for life was Gurbani which he followed to the letter such as:

'Gur Kee Ninda Sunai Na Kaan', and 'Sura So Pachanyeh Jo Larai Deen Keh Heth. Purja Purja Kut Marai Kabhoo Na Shadai Keth'

By Jasbir Singh (son of Shaheed Bhai Hari Singh Ji)

Shaheed Bhai Dharambir Singh Ji



Shaheed Bhai Dharambir Singh Ji was born on 15th March 1953 in Delhi. His father's name was Bhai Lal Singh and his mother's name was Baal Kaur. His father was from the village of Sahowaal, Tehsil Daska, in the District of Saikot in Pakistan.

His father and his two brothers started doing construction work at a young age. The three brothers used to go around the nearby villages for building work and they were fortunate to do the Sangat of Bhai Sahib Jawala Singh Ji in the village of Bhiki. This Gurmukh used to live in basic accommodation and constructed a very beautiful place for Guru Granth Sahib Ji where Amrit-Bani was read daily and pilgrims could get Langar and rest. Bhai Lal Singh and his smaller brother Bhai Gopal Singh were so influenced by the Granthis of the Gurdwara, Bhai Sobha Singh and Bhai Tarlok Singh, that they eventually decided to stay in the village (Bhiki) to continue building work.

After the formation of Pakistan they lived for a while in Hoshiapur, then in Delhi and finally they all met up in Amritsar. Here, Bhai Sobha Singh formed a Gurdwara in a Masjid and Bhai Tarlok Singh did Sewa of the Sangat just like him. With Satguru's Grace they started Kirtan, Langar and Karah Prashad here just like the Bhiki Gurdwara in Pakistan.

Four of five families lived near this Gurdwara Sahib and Bhai Dharambir Singh's father and uncle (Bhai Lal Singh and Bhai Gopal Singh) also settled here with their families. By meeting this Gursikh Sangat they listened to Kirtan and Nitnem everyday and after a while Bhai Gopal Singh and Bhai Lal Singh started going to Akhand Kirtani Jatha Smagams and slowly both families took Amrit.

Bhai Dharambir Singh took Amrit during his school education and he was also taking the Shromani Committee's religious exams. After studying up to the tenth Class his life took a change in direction. At this time both brothers made a home in Ajeet Nagar and the smaller brother Bhai Gopal Singh opened a factory for making Kirpans. Bhai Dharambir Singh learnt how to make Kirpans from his uncle and started up a separate factory where he worked for five years.

During this time he would also attend Akhand Kirtani Jatha Smagams and would take part in doing Sewa of Ishnaan of Harmandir Sahib during the night. Where he had great enthusiasm in listening to Kirtan, he was also very keen in learning Kirtan. He was learning the Harmonium and Tabla and had started to learn the Dilruba.

Since the start of his there were many Gursikhs who used to come to him. He had a lot of respect for them and did as much Sewa as he could for them. If any Gursikh needed money he would be happy to help and never asked for it back, even if he could only just get by himself.

The love and friendship between Bhai Dharambir Singh and Bhai Fauja Singh grew day by day and he always accompanied him for religious causes. Bhai Dharambir Singh also accompanied Bhai Fauja Singh when they went to stop some thugs who were showing disrespect to Guru Granth Sahib at Guru Ke Mehal and Bhai Salo and had planned to attack Guru Ke Mehal. Stones and acid bottles attacked the Gursikhs and in that case the Gursikhs were arrested and Bhai Dharambir Singh was jailed for about three months.

He attained Shaheedi at a young age. He was due to be married.

Shaheed Jathedar Amrik Singh Ji



Shaheed Jathedar Amrik Singh Ji was born 1957 to Harbhajan Kaur and Kundan Singh in the village of Kajala in Amritsar. He has one elder and four younger brothers.

Though only a young man, he was honoured with the position of Jathedar at Sri Akal Takht Sahib because he persuaded many people to come here and take Amrit. He himself took Amrit from here six years earlier.

After completing his primary education he was not interested in studying any more. He had a great love for Gurbani and Sikh History.

He was a very compassionate soul and felt distressed at the sight of needy people. To help them he gave money and things from his house and even the clothes he was wearing without any hesitation. Once when he was doing Sewa for the Guru's Sangat, when he could not get the money he needed, he sold a ring made of gold from his home.

He had a daily routine of reciting Naam-Bani at Amrit Vela. No matter how late he was in Satsang the night before he would always be awake for Amrit Vela. At Rehras time in the evening, he would stop his work, no matter how important it was and be present for the Rehras Divaan and bring others with him. This was a part of his Nitnem. After the morning's Nitnem he would not eat any food before doing Darshan of Guru Sahib.

Bhai Amrik Singh was always doing Sangat of Gurmukhs or Sangat at the Guru's house, and he was always strict in his Rehni-Behni according to Gurmat Bebek. He also acquired a love for Sarbloh Rehni (eating in iron utensils). He would always keep his Bata (iron utensil) shining and would never let anyone who had not taken Amrit use it.

He persuaded the workers who helped his mother and father with the farming work and many other people to tread the Guru's path. Even though his family was well off he still wore simple Gursikhi clothes. He would never tolerate anybody who showed disrespect towards Guru Sahib.

On Vaisakhi day Bhai Amrik Singh woke up at Amrit Vela and did his Ishnaan and Nitnem. He then went to the Gurdwara and then went to meet Jathedar Kala Singh who was staying at room number five at Guru Nanak Niwas. He then left his shoes there and bathed at the Holy Amritsar Sarowar. Afterwards he walked around Akal Takht Sahib, did Darshan of the Shastars, thought about the Shaheeds and did Ardas that he may also be able to give Kurbanī for his Guru and Panth. He then walked around the Nishaan Sahib reading parts of the Hukamnama:

***Kaya kagad mun parwana
Sir ke lek na parey lana***

(Dhanasari Mahalla 5, Panna 662)

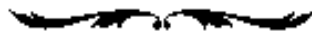
He met a Gurmukh on the way to the Divaan who says to him, "Singh of the Guru, today is the time for Kurbanī, Guru Ji is in need of a head. The Singhs are preparing to go and stop the insults being shouted against our Guru, you should also be present". Then Bhai Amrik Singh walks towards the Guru's Army. As he was walking he was about to drink water to quench his thirst, when another Gursikh took the glass he reached out for. Then he did not care for water or langar or bother to put his shoes on, and went forward to offer Shaheedi. As he received bullets, he shouted out 'Fateh' and died a Shaheed.



Bhai Amrik Singh Ji being presented with a Kirpan and Siropa in recognition of exemplary Seva in which he encouraged hundreds of Sikhs to take Amrit at Siri Akal Takht Sahib.

A Martyr's Words

Extracts from Bhai Fauja Singh's Letters



Bhai Fauja Singh wrote many letters, which displayed his true love for the Guru and the Khalsa Panth. Here are just a few extracts taken from several letters, which he sent to American Sikhs. The Beads of Truth magazine published many letters written by Bhai Fauja Singh alongside the written experiences of American Sikhs who had been befriended by members of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha in India.

Bhai Fauja Singh enjoyed the Sangat of many American Sikhs. It seems that he felt they were the living manifestation of Guru Gobind Singh Ji's prophecy and its fulfilment. In their eyes he saw the Khalsa Spirit, which had

spread its waves even to the citadels of the West. As we read these letters, it becomes clear that Bhai Fauja Singh found it easy to empathise with Gursikhs regardless of their nationality, colour and creed. These Khalsa traits were so embedded within him that they shine through his words.

"It is easy to understand how God and Guru were preparing him for martyrdom, during his meditative months in jail. Now let us offer our Ardaas, that we should all take full advantage of the example and spirit he has dedicated to the future of the entire Sikh Panth."

Beads of Truth, spring 1978.

Letter One

To, Beta Soorya Kaur Ji

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

We are both in Chardi-Kalaa and pray that you may also be in the same ascendant spirit of life. The moment you left us, we began to receive affectionate and spiritual waves from you constantly. We have received your second letter and have both been touched reading it. It represents the very love we expected to receive from you. A real love is that which lasts for ages together.

Life is but a dream and death is coming soon to disturb this illusion. Until and unless we come to such a state of mind and realise death before leaving this body, we will not reach our goal and purpose in this lifetime. The way of life you have adopted is a blessed and auspicious.

If the people of America are not hospitable and cosy, you have been sent to this land by the Great Lord Guru Gobind Singh Ji to teach these people how to live a more cosy life. If my sweet Lord kindly returns you to India by his sweet Will, I will be happy and thank Him, and have an opportunity to learn from and share the Khalsa spirit prevailing within you.

Believe me, Guru Gobind Singh Ji himself has sent such people to all parts of the world, and all these lives will rise in unison and the world will see the beauty and charm of Dharam. Only then will this planet breathe a sigh of relief, free from its sins and problems. Please accept that you are amongst those specially equipped souls, and that all unexpected and impossible things will be made possible by you.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

Bhai Fauja Singh



Letter Two

To, Beta Soorya Kaur Ji

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

Regrettably, we have been very late in writing and replying in response to your letters. We too have been very busy trying to expand the Sikh way of life in the villages near our Khalsa farm. We have been travelling to villages on foot from place to place. People have taken the Guru's Amrit in the hundreds and have promised to live a truthful life; a very large number of people are ready to take Amrit. It is in this way that the process has been going on.

People throughout the whole world are tired with various intoxicants and a multitude of sins. They are waiting for an alternative and respite from all these troubles and afflictions. At the moment, only truthful and devoted Sikhs are able to become beacons of light for all these misguided, ruined and wandering people who are currently under the sway of darkness and ignorance. Whilst we are providing nothing but a dim message to these people, we look to you to carry this message of Truth, Love and Infinite Light to the rest of the world.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

Bhai Fauja Singh

6th September 1977



Letter Three

To, Our Dear Daughter Soorya Kaur Ji

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

We are but four Khalsa from the Khalsa farm contained within this jail. All are happy and content according to the sweet Will of God. The Police have implicated us in a murder case. The whole story you will come to know about in detail when you next visit India. The previous case, the related incident having took place in Amritsar, remains unsettled and yet a new case has commenced.

We are very happy and in Chardi-Kala. Your mother (referring to his wife Bibi Amarjit Kaur) is also in Chardi-Kalaa. All cases will be settled by our Lord and ultimately, we will win just as the moon overcomes the clouds. Clouds can never permanently surround the moon. God has also given us ample time to improve ourselves in this jail. Time is precious so I entreat you to forget everything of this world and enlighten your soul in such a way that you are imbued with Naam.

This is an actual phenomenon and not merely the 'light' of well-intended thoughts or a figment of overactive imaginations. This light is the beginning of our journey towards the Infinite, so always seek to be absorbed by the Infinite.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

Fauja Singh



Letter Four

To, Beta Soorya Ji

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

I have read your letter. Please do not think that we have not made concerted efforts to acquit ourselves from all these charges; and so we shall continue doing so in the future. However, if by the will of God I am kept here then that is all right; there is no harm in it. I feel rather blessed here. There is enough regular time for meditation and for various spiritual studies. The walls of this jail cannot confine the spirit and energy flowing from the Khalsa. Khalsa is a bodiless being like a fragrance that cannot be contained by mere brick walls. I simply pray that God will bless this fragrance upon me while I am here.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

Fauja Singh

2nd January 1977



Letter Five

To, Dear Sister Sat Kirpal Kaur Ji

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

The created systems of heaven and earth are moving along according to the Grace of God. Those who are imbued by The Truth of His Name become part and parcel of this same vast force.

The Khalsa does not exist under the protection of the S.G.P.C. or the police. The Khalsa is able to face loneliness, separation, hunger, fatigue, the piercing sun and the biting cold. The Khalsa exclaims the Truth; remaining unperturbed if they insult him, ignoring opposition if they oppose him, gets dragged if they drag him and stoned if they stone him.

The Khalsa can cross the mountains of the Himalayas on foot in order to preach in Tibet without any protection. The Khalsa can penetrate the dense forests of Brazil for the same purpose, even if he has to sacrifice his life. The Khalsa does not mind death for the True cause. In fact it is profitable, enjoyable and pleasurable for the Khalsa to give his very life in pursuit of this duty. This is positively healthy, happy and holy for him. (Bhai Fauja Singh is alluding to the 3HO slogan: Healthy, Happy, Holy. The American Sikhs who visited him were members of this American Jathebandi).

I wish to be frank and to speak clearly; shun your fears as new arrivals in this strange and new country, amongst this people and their language. You should travel through the villages, from one place to another. People will welcome you everywhere. They may not understand and perhaps even hoot at you due to their misunderstanding or ignorance. Through patience you will be able to remove this malady from their minds. You should keep smiling despite every tense situation.

May God bless you with strength and energy to revitalise your fatherland (Bhai Fauja Singh is referring to the fact that their father Guru Gobind Singh Ji lived in India). We welcome you all to this land. I am sure that if a group of two hundred white Khalsa swans accept this mission and travel through villages, it will turn the face of this land towards the acceptance of reality.

In the end to all,

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

Fauja Singh

Your Brother Fauja Singh
District Sudhar Ghar



Letter Six

To, Sister Sat Kirpal Kaur Ji

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

The message I want to convey to all my friends is this:

I am put into this jail neither by the opposition nor by the Sessions Judge, Gurdaspur, but I have been put in jail by Guru Gobind Singh Ji only; not to be punished, but to be blessed. It is a period of complete rest, the likes of which we always want.

We cannot avoid, even if we were to try any harder, the battles in life; this includes any imprisonment or death-sentence. If we stop, we are not Sikhs, and if we positively continue the truthful way, we will constantly come across all these occurrences - harassment, fights, battles, imprisonment and death-sentences. Don't feel that the way of the struggle is the path to trouble; rather, the way of the struggle leads us to the secret peace.

A Martyr's Words

Righteousness will stand by you and the 'devil' will disassociate, provided that you are truly righteous. It is then that the game starts. You will gather strength day by day and those who stood by you but were weak will leave you, making your stand and cause even more pure. The weaker devils on the devil's side will leave their master increasing his weakness; ultimately, the devil will be vanquished leaving you victorious in the field-of-play (the battlefield) providing that you continue to make progress.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji sacrificed his parents, children and all belongings for the Truth. Where are they who did not allow their children to die for the Guru? They are all dead.

It must be understood that time passes with its usual constant speed. Realise the nature of time, its composition. Look at what it really is. Now don't delay your heartfelt and honest beginning, we should sacrifice ourselves otherwise after some time, we will have to repent for our slackness and the duality we failed to understand. Let us be lions, the Singh Sahibs who slaughter the lamb within their own personality. A constant bliss will prevail and reverberate within our motor and sensory nervous systems.

I assure you that He Himself sends energy in all difficult periods such as struggles, troubles, battles, imprisonments and death-sentences.

In the end I bow to all of you; I welcome all of you. I wish for you yet more purity and with these tears of love, I meet and depart from you and again envision you within a Supreme Peace - an extremely still and heavenly peace.

With love and concern for all,

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Fauja Singh

Fauja Singh - a weak Khalsa
District Jail, Gurdaspur



Letter Seven

To, M.S.S. Sardarni Premka Kaur Khalsa, S.S. Gurubanda Singh Khalsa, M.S.S. Ram Das Singh Khalsa and all others

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

You have written that I have been released on bail and am able to serve 'outside' for a while; please refrain from writing this. I never was in jail. Kindly enshrine within your mind that Khalsa is not a body; it is a spirit. The Khalsa operates and vibrates to an equal extent both within jail and outside it.

Even the biggest dacoits in this jail were diverted towards and finally into the Khalsa - they made pledges to serve the Khalsa Panth and those who commit like this are released. In this way a stream of positive individuals will leave jail and spread their goodness elsewhere.

Don't feel that I will again be imprisoned within a jail. I was never contained within a jail and will never ever be confined to a prison. I am always imprisoned within the jail of my dear father Guru Gobind Singh Ji

Maharaj. If He so wills, no force can stop the functioning of the Khalsa. Secondly, I want to ensure that you do not feel you are segregated or may be segregated from the Khalsa Panth. You are part of the Khalsa Panth, Harmandir Sahib and Siri Akal Takhat Sahib. The Guru has accepted you and no force can take you away from Him.

Khalsa never intends to conclude; the Khalsa's gait is like that of an elephant's; a large number of dogs bark at him, but he always goes his way undaunted and never hints towards a responsive attack - because he feels that they cannot affect him. Khalsa is a figure of complete confidence and this can never be shattered. Khalsa knows no defeat. But this stage comes when one wants to happily sacrifice their life.

I am devoting much of my time to meditation. As a result of this I am amazed that all things required are attained without effort and arrive amidst the hustle and bustle around me. I am certain that the power, organisation, money, command and authority are a result of Naam. If we bear Naam within our hearts all these things will come to you of their own accord. You may use these gifts to spread your ego and personality throughout the world, or you may use all these powers to benefit this planet.

As long as the Sikhs stuck to the Guru's instructions regarding spirit, mind and body, they did not see the face of defeat. Yet when they left the way of the Guru, they waded into murky waters. After experiencing the reality of life without the Guru's teachings, they again walked the Guru's way and became strong enough to survive as a fully-fledged nation. I place emphasis upon this singular point; live a Khalsa life full of the love for God.

Naam is the key to all organization. I want to write one story about the tenth Master. When in his last war he was stopped by Sarsa Nai (river) there was a bloody battle on the banks. Early in the morning Guru ordered that morning prayers should commence, while a portion of Sikhs continued to defend.

Such a risk proves that our Guru came to this earth primarily to give Naam to the poor and needy people of this country. It is not that he was against the aims of the Khalsa organisation; his forces were Akaal Purkh Ki Fauj, however this organization was made by the will of God. The fundamental point is that we should absorb Naam twenty-four hours a day no matter what the circumstances. This Naam when it finds its way into the hearts of brave people creates legions of saint-soldiers. The Almighty personally accomplishes this task.

In the end I may assure you that with the Grace of God, we will sacrifice our lives for this cause. Every drop of our blood will be shed before you are segregated from the Khalsa Panth. We will bear all troubles with contentment and tranquillity before any harm comes to you in India.

You have also written about the removal of patits (apostates) from the Takhts. At the present moment there are mainly patits at these Takhts. Sure, a time will come when these thrones will be rid of patits, but such ambitions need the purifying tides of pure Khalsa blood. We are preparing the nation with the tone of Naam; very peacefully amidst the rush, very slowly amongst the hurry and most affectionately towards all opposition.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

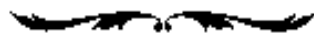
Fauja Singh

Bhai Fauja Singh & Bibi Amarjit Kaur



Reminiscences

Meeting Bhai Fauja Singh Ji



This section features the firsthand accounts of Sikhs from across the world, all of which had the privilege of spending time with Bhai Fauja Singh Ji.

Selfless Service

His daily routine began when he'd wake up at two in the morning during Amrit Vela. After having a bath he would begin Naam Simran meditation. After reciting Nitnem and following Satguru's Darshan he would sing Kirtan in the Sangat and then he would be happy doing Sewa all day long.

Bhai Fauja Singh's house was very close to Siri Darbar Sahib that meant that for many years countless Gursikhs would visit him when going there. The couple lived on the third floor where there were no facilities for water. Every night, before going to sleep, Bhai Fauja Singh would serve the overnight Sangat staying at his house by filling buckets of water from the water pump down below and taking these upstairs for Amrit Vela Ishnaan. These three flights of stairs were so narrow that it was difficult even just walking up them without carrying anything. When we asked him to install basic facilities for accessible water, he would laughingly reply; "Sister, if some other facilities were made available then I would not be able to do this Sewa anymore".

We used to talk at home back in America amongst ourselves that this was a soul of a Shaheed sent here for a particular reason; and when that event took place, this soul wouldn't remain on this planet for much longer. Guru Sahib gave His blessings and made Bhai Sahib offer Shaheedi to awaken the sleeping Panth and to re-instill the Khalsa spirit, love, devotion and respect for Satguru. This Gursikh was always ready to obey the Guru's order and it was this spirit of devotion and sense of duty towards the Guru that made Bhai Fauja Singh immediately get up from doing the Sewa of Langar and present himself for the ultimate sacrifice. He completed the Sewa that Satguru had sent him to do. Bhai Fauja Singh and the other twelve Gursikhs gave their lives to remove the Panth's complacency.

Bibi Harsharan Kaur
Jullundhar, Punjab

Gentle Warrior

I know he was a fierce and brave warrior of the Guru, but I remember him mostly as a gentle and kind teacher. We were so young and so new to Sikhi; we were so ignorant. Bibi Amarjeet Kaur and Bhai Fauja Singh treated us as their spiritual children, and patiently taught us and inspired us upon the Guru's Path. They would write the sweetest letters to encourage our devotion to Waheguru. He never chastised or humiliated us for the hundreds of thousands of mistakes we made every day. Instead, his pure love would gently correct and immediately forgive every mistake.

Bibi Shanti Kaur Khalsa
America

Standard of The Khalsa

As we got off the bus in Gurdaspur, Bibi Amarjit Kaur told me to go onwards to the jail. The mid-afternoon sun was as blinding as the entry way was dark. I just stared at the man dressed in perfect white Bana. He opened the barn-like door of the prison, so I naturally assumed he was a warden or perhaps even the jailer. He was smiling at all the Akhand Kirtani Sikhs as they came in and as it turned out, he was the prisoner sentenced to life imprisonment for defending a woman who had been mercilessly gang-raped.

This incident illustrates why Bhai Fauja Singh could never be contained within a prison cell. He was the host of the jail, generating Chardi-Kala and the Akhand Kirtani Sikhs were in soaring high spirits when they met him.

His wife Bibi Amarjit Kaur led the American Sikhs on a tour of the prison. It was a tremendous relief to see that Bhai Fauja Singh was under such light security, that he could organize the prison's Gurdwara. He proudly showed us his private cell and the cell next to it for the devoted Sewadars. Such a leader of righteousness could never be imprisoned.

He fought and fasted to attain his cell for meditation. It was a dark square-shaped room containing a huge mattress. There was a little hole in the roof but otherwise no windows. The door opened out into a private yard where he set up a stove (one rectangular oil tin) with a round steel water pot on top. This was where he prepared his own food. The walls were painted yellow. This cell contrasted greatly to the modern red brick walls holding back shorthaired men who ganged together at the opening of the wall to stare at us.

Bhai Fauja Singh was the light of the prison, an inspiration for the prisoners as well as us! The men who rediscovered Sikhi under his influence were elevated from prison life. Their faith in Dharam took them beyond their situation. They were eternally grateful to their leader for their new beards. His concern for his fellow inmates was so deep and intense that when he left jail, they were still a major concern for him.

Bibi Harikrishan Kaur
Espanola, New Mexico

Detached Like A Lotus Flower

Bhai Fauja Singh was a completely carefree soul. He did not care for his own self or for luxuries, which we all seem to be gathering in these modern times. I remember watching a Gathka fight take place; Bhai Sahib and his opponent wielded swords. Bhai Sahib received a cut to his leg. When some Singhs came to look at the cut, Bhai Sahib told them not to bother about it, but it was clear to everyone that the cut was a serious wound. It was about four inches long and one inch deep. However, to everyone's amazement, he continued to fight as if nothing had happened. This was the everyday life of this most special Gursikh.

Master Niranjana Singh
Gurdaspur, Punjab

Friendly Stranger

Towards the end of my stay in Amritsar, while walking around the Parkarma one morning, I noticed a Singh ahead of me. I admired the strength of his projection and noticed the chakar around his head and thought to myself how great it looked on him! No sooner than the thought came into my head, he turned around quickly, folded his hands and bowed saying, “Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ke Fateh” and then placed his chakra over my turban as I also bowed. What a surprise indeed!

I felt a little bad for thinking such a thing and tried to give it back to him, but he insisted I keep it saying; “It is yours my sister”.

All I could say in return was “Waheguru”. There is a true bond of friendship we established that would always remain unbroken. I am happy that I was able to enjoy this beautiful chance to be with him.

Bibi Krishna Kaur
America

Sowing the Seeds Of Sikhi

Bhai Fauja Singh was like a gardener who selflessly and joyfully planted seeds in the Punjabi villages in the hope that the spirit of the Khalsa would be re-awakened.

Bibi Rajbir Kaur Khalsa
Oregon, America

Guardian Angel

I had travelled to Amritsar alone and spent most of the first parts of my stay there very much alone except for the growing friendship with my only true friend.

When things were down and darkest and my body and soul were crying out for help, a man in a black turban appeared and in his company my spirits soared. He was a shy and very humble person. He later told me when the Guru sees one of his Sikhs in trouble he always sends another to help. This is a Truth!

This Singh inspired me to become a Sikh of the True Guru - it was Bhai Fauja Singh. He showed me by his love and devotion how to truly live as one.

A Gursikh

Natural Leader

Throughout my time I have seen many Jathedars, Leaders, Parcharaks and so on. However, I have never met anyone as Chardi-Kala as Bhai Fauja Singh - he was a living example of Gurmat. Let me give you just one example of his true greatness, reflected through his humility.

The Jatha would hold well-attended Smagams throughout India. These were usually held in the big parathan (old/ ancient) Gurdwaras. I regularly booked leave from my airbase and attended these Smagams.

Bhai Fauja Singh was highly respected by all of us naujawans; he was a natural leader and we were all in awe of him. He was a great general. Day and night he would spend in Naam Abyass, while doing Sewa for the thousands of Sangatan.

Back in the 1970's, very few of these Gurdwara Sahibs had modern facilities. The Sangat would go into the nearby fields to relieve themselves. After the Smagam, Bhai Fauja Singh gathered all the naujawans and told us how pavitaar (special/ pure) these places were. The Guru-ghar should always be immaculate he would tell us and we should not only clean the Gurdwara premises, but the fields around it as well. He gave us all buckets and told us to follow him into the fields. I saw him with his bare hands pick up faeces and put them in the bucket. Here was one of the great generals of our Panth, a renowned leader; and yet here he was displaying immense nimarata (deep humility).

How many of our contemporary leaders, parchaaraks and so-called sants would have the humility to do Sewa like that? He was a Nawab Kapur Singh of the modern era.

Bhai Amolak Singh
Australia

Fearless Gursikh

As a young boy, Bhai Fauja Singh had taken Chulla (a sip of Amrit given to Sikh children) from the Panj Pyare. He spent time deeply engrossed in Naam-Abyass. The family and other villagers were at times distressed by his wayward attitude. He would sometimes disappear for days and deeply engross himself in Abyass. People would go out looking for him assuming that he was lost, only for him to return smiling absolutely free from worldliness.

Sometimes at night he was seen in the local cemetery sitting in a meditative position. When asked what he was doing there at such a late hour, he once replied to another Gursikh; “I was challenging the ghosts and spirits with the Guru's Naam”. This was the belief and spirit of Bhai Fauja Singh as a young child.

Master Nirnanjan Singh
Gurdaspur

Straight Talker

After the Guru Ke Mehal incident in the early seventies, Bhai Fauja Singh became very famous in Panthic circles. He was very highly respected. The Akalis organised a huge conference at Teja Singh Samundri hall at the Harmandir Sahib complex, shortly after the incident. Here they gave Bhai Fauja Singh a Siropa for his gallant Seva.

When Bhai Fauja Singh went onstage he delivered a forceful speech, completely lambasting the Akalis. He told them that they should die of shame because they couldn't even stop our Guru being disrespected. He warned them that this weak leadership would go on to cost the Sikh nation dearly.

Dr Darshan Singh
Ex-Dean Punjab University.

Protector Of The Oppressed

I remember when Bhai Fauja Singh moved to our area and set-up the Khalsa Farm. It had a dramatic impact because young Singhs would come

wearing Bana. This was rare in our area. Apparently, the daily routine he instilled amongst the naujawan was very strict. You could see all of these young boys becoming strong and having the presence of Akal Purkh Ki Fauj.

In our local area there was a thug who bullied everyone like a warlord. He would use extortion and get money from all the businesses in the area. Everyone was absolutely afraid of him. He would regularly assault people in the streets and the police would say nothing to him. He was over 6 ft 5 inches tall and very strong. He had heard Bhai Fauja Singh had moved to the area. One day, he assaulted one of the young boys who had come to Khalsa Farm. After beating up the young boy he told him to tell Bhai Fauja Singh to come and fight him if he was a real man.

The next day, Bhai Fauja Singh came to the town. Youths from the farm accompanied him. The thug walked forward and confronted Bhai Fauja Singh. Bhai Fauja Singh proceeded to scold the young lad who had previously been assaulted by the thug. He said to him that he should be ashamed that he wore the dastaar of Guru Gobind Singh Ji and was beaten-up. He then said to the thug that he was a strong man and this was a gift from God. He told him to give up his negative ways and to become a Sikh of the Guru. But the thug was abusive and hit him. Bhai Sahib remained calm and once again told the thug to stop his evil ways. Instead of listening, he pulled out a weapon and attacked Fauja Singh. A fierce fight ensued which ended with the thug losing his life. Everyone started cheering and hugged Bhai Fauja Singh. They were overjoyed that their oppressor was finally dead.

However, Bhai Fauja Singh was unhappy. He said that the man was brave but sadly he had chosen the wrong path. He told us that if this thug had become a Sikh he could have helped many people.

Bhai Fauja Singh had to leave the area as the police were after him. The police never did anything about the thug when he terrorised the local

people, but they were now after Bhai Fauja Singh. He went to Amritsar and then went to the police station and handed himself over. The people of our area will never forget him. He was a great soul.

A Gursikh

Great Visionary

During the spring of 1978, many Premi Gursikhs and myself went to Punjab. We were in high spirits and attended the Vaisakhi Akhand Kirtan Smagam. The Sangat that had travelled from the UK was large yet Bhai Fauja Singh begged us all to stay at his house. He begged to do the Sewa of all the Gursikhs. We happily went along to his house.

In the afternoon, we were all talking about the need to do Parchaar in Punjab. Bhai Fauja Singh stated that not only Parchaar was needed but also the flower of the Panth also needed to be watered with the blood of Gursikhs. He said that the cycle of hardship had turned full-circle and the Khalsa needed to become strong by immersing itself in Naam.

I was most impressed by his personality because he had so much Khalsa Spirit. We did Rehras Sahib together and then, during the next day at the Smagam, I heard Bhai Fauja Singh had become Shaheed - fulfilling the prophecies of the previous day. He was a true son of Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

The Late Bhai Rama Singh Jathedar Of Akhand Kirtani Jatha (UK)

Inspirational Spirit

After the Gurdwara Bhai Salo Ji and Guru Keh Mehal Ji incident, Bhai Fauja Singh had to spend some time in Jail. Coincidentally, the fascist right-wing Hindu thugs of Jan Sangh (now BJP) who tried to desecrate the Gurdwara were also in the same prison. They complained of the harsh conditions and spent their days crying for tea. However when the Sangat found out the Bhai Fauja Singh and his companions were there, they flocked to

the prison with Langar and fruit. The fascists looked-on in despair as the Sangat did Sewa of the Gursikhs, tending to their injuries. These were mainly burns to their legs and feet, which were caused by the acid bottles.

The Gursikhs spent their time engrossed in Naam and Bani. The warden of the prison, as well as the officers, realised the Gursikh nature of Bhai Fauja Singh and held him in high regard. In one of the warden's letters, he mentioned how he saw this Sikh sit in meditation all night long and wondered where he attained his strength. Although the warden was a Hindu, Bhai Fauja Singh fascinated him. Many other prisoners started to develop a Gursikh nature thanks to the Sangat.

Many of them wanted to take Amrit. Bhai Fauja Singh made a request to the Warden asking if the Jatha could come to the prison and perform a Rainsbhai Kirtan and Amrit Sanchaar programme. The request was approved and the Sangat was allowed into the prison. Many took Amrit and came into the protection of the Guru's Charan. One of these new Khalsa was the warden himself.



Bibi Shanti Kaur Khalsa